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Mr. Cha^s F. Hunt

June 15th 1830

ANTI-SUICIDE,
A POEM,
(SENTIMENTAL AND ARGUMENTATIVE.)
IN FOUR BOOKS;
TENDING TO DISPLAY
THE FOLLY AND UNLAWFULNESS
OF
SELF-MURDER;

*In which is introduced the affecting Tale of Celia and
Menander, Acasto, &c.*

BY WILLIAM HART.

“Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to withstand
The stings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or take up arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them.”

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1809.

ANTY-SUICIDE

A POEM

(SERIOUS AND ALLEGORICAL)

IN FOUR BOOKS;

THE END OF THE MATTER

THE POET AND THE LAWYER

SELF-MURDER

The author is a member of the University of Cambridge
and has been a student of the same for many years.

BY WILLIAM HART



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P R E F A C E.

HAVING been witness of an act of Suicide, singularly affecting as to its immoral tendency, and the dreadful circumstances attending it;—viewing also, with deep concern, the *innumerable* and *daily* instances of that much-to-be-lamented act, as well as its increasing prevalence in this country in particular; I have been determined to write and argue on the subject, not only of its folly, but its actual criminality; by some disputed, by others doubted, and by the generality too often unthought of, or even suspected. And, as my views are not the display of poetical excellence, but merely the welfare of community, the arguments deduced and adopted on this important occasion are clothed in the plainest language, in order that the matter in discussion may the easier come home to men's minds and business. For the same purpose, the principles on which I argue are also arranged under the separate heads from whence they are derived; and I think it but fair, when I enter the lists of discussion, I should fight with the same weapon as my opponent. For, some may choose to combat the arguments against Suicide

PREFACE.

with the broad shield of moral virtue; others may assume nothing more than what nature produces in their defence. Some may put on the whole armour of God, and oppose with their faith; others may put on merely the helmet of Minerva, and attack with the arms of sense. This may unsheath the sword of valour, that oppose the mere glittering breast-plate of sensibility. However, it is a bloodless war we wage, and I enter into it with purity of intention. The subject I know is unpopular;—to do good is also out of fashion;—but the feelings arising from a virtuous intention, in spite of prejudice, will ever be a consolation. In ancient days, he who saved the life of a Roman citizen was decreed the civic crown. If, on the perusal of my humble lines, but *one* person should be warned of the criminality of self-murder, and thereby be preserved to society from an untimely and a guilty death, I shall have attained a felicity that will content me to my latest days. I can then only wish the subject had been in abler hands, or that my abilities had been equal to my success. Though a benevolent intention may not be able to parry the thrusts and point of criticism, yet in this instance, it is to be hoped, it may be *awhile* disarmed. I certainly think that public opinion deserves the utmost deference; but the cause of humanity, however humbly advocated, is tantamount to every ulterior consideration;—to that,—to the welfare of community, and the preservation of social order, I dedicate these lines.

ANTI-SUICIDE,

A POEM,

IN FOUR BOOKS.

BOOK THE FIRST

IS divided into Five Sections, in the First of which, the criminality of Self-Murder is in general terms asserted. In the Second, that very criminality is proved by man, in the act, averting the purpose of his being and coming into the world. In the Third and Fourth Sections, the arguments to prove the unlawfulness of Suicide are deduced from nature and religion, the act being contrary both to natural and divine law; and, in the Fifth Section, the same inference is drawn from the act being also contrary to social order, and the mutual and universal, as well as individual, obligations due to mankind.

ARGUMENT I.

The subject proposed:—the discussion of the unlawfulness of self-murder:—invocation:—the criminality of the act asserted:—its increasing prevalence:—the want of written arguments to arrest its progress, and do away the impressions that are imbibed in its favour, are stated to prove the necessity of this attempt to display its folly and unlawfulness. It is unsanctioned by virtue, is no evidence of courage, sense, sensibility, or honesty; and, however its enormity may be fantastically coloured over by the specious opinions of others, or concealed by the enthusiasm of our own feelings, it is still a crime in the eye of heaven, and the consideration of thinking man! —the happy consequences that may result from a proper discussion of the subject.—Man, convinced of the enormity of the act, may no more invert thereby the laws of nature and of God! Apostrophe to the spirit of one, who, under the extreme sorrows of seduction, rashly committed the crime.

THE FOLLY AND CRIMINALITY OF SUICIDE ASSERTED.

OF him, who quits the post by heav'n assign'd,
And thinks the action marks a valiant mind ;—
Of him,—whom Suicide invites to stray,
And fondly dreams that Reason points the way ;
Of him,—who, tho' by violence achiev'd,
Still thinks the act by tenderness conceiv'd ;
Of him,—who boasts, (tho' truly vile the name,)
The deed by virtue is upheld to fame ;
Of him,—who finds the soul so eas'ly freed,
Thinks thus, that nature form'd him for the deed
Of him—who meets his God, unask'd, unaw'd,
And trusts religion vindicates the fraud ;
The fraud committed, with most specious breath,
To forge a passport through the gates of death,
By falsely stating ev'ry duty done,
The circle mark'd by heaven fairly run ;
Of him,—who stains with blood life's fleeting wing ;
The dark, the desp'rate, Suicide I sing.

Come thou bright muse ! who didst of yore in-
spire,
A Milton's bosom with celestial fire ;
Snatch'd from the altar of the true sublime,
Nor evanescent, by the floods of time ;
Fix'd in our native hemisphere to shine,
The cynosure of poesy divine !
Oh let such beams, by love and truth refin'd,
Light up the noblest pow'rs of the mind.
Lov'd muse ! assist me in this useful plan
Of tracing Suicide, the shame of man !
Call'd act of lunacy, in this our time,
Whose proper designation is—a crime !
Ah ! if the muse could flow so sweetly terse,
In Rochester's salacious witty verse,

Does not a subject of this consequence,
Deserve, at least, her magic influence?
For, scarce a sun in wond'rous course doth shine,
But sees some victim offer'd to its shrine.
Ah! shrine indeed;—for, like the saints of yore,
This fiend is canoniz'd, and fools adore.
The learn'd have preach'd, depraved tastes to please,
Men to their doctrines are such devotees,
They meet their fate, with calm and pious smiles,
As Hindoo women mount their fun'ral piles.
But diff'rent fires consume their diff'rent frames;
The Hindoo falls by elemental flames,
But Suicide's a prey to self-conceit,
Consum'd by vain imagination's heat.

A shrine! yet where's the wonder to appear,
Moments of sorrow, trifles oft endear.
The sinking man beholds with hopeful eyes
The thinnest twigg, and to engrasp it tries.
Thus doth despair so strong her pictures paint,
That even Suicide appears a saint.

Yes,—at whose shrine, self-immolated, lay
Victims on victims, almost ev'ry day.
In England too, whose sons (ah, endless shame,)
To universal freedom boast the claim;
Yet life they rule with most despotic sway,
That slave, the worst of passions, must obey.

Come then, bright fancy! with an eye serene,
Survey the horrors of the frantic scene.
Yon form behold! fast gliding tow'ards the flood;
To cancel present ill, he hazards future good.
Observe his hurried step,—disorder'd mein:
Has he no friend to timely intervene,
To dry the tears, that tremble on his cheeks,
And snatch him from the wat'ry grave he seeks?
Is there no line, to recollection dear,
Whose friendly moral might be useful here,
At once to save him from his desp'rate fate,
And teach him how to bear his hapless state;
Whose wond'rous argument at once might prove,
The deed, abhor'd below, condemn'd above;

The action desperate, the motive pride,
The event uncertain, and unjust beside?

The foul act, thus, has surely no pretence
To courage, virtue, honesty, or sense.
For desperation courage cannot be,
And there no sense is, in uncertainty.
Pride is not virtue;—virtue, you will find,
Midst life's reverses, wears a constant mind,
Nor does the over care of self impart,
A noble sensibility of heart:
Nor is it honest, just, or strictly true,
To die, 'fore nature's debt's completely due.

And let the vague opinions men make known,
Or feelings, or emotions of their own,
Gloss o'er the deed, with shew of false pretence,
It's still a crime, in th' eye of truth and sense;
Still there are two that must its folly know,—
A God above, and thinking man below.

Alas! he has no friend, his soul to cheer,
No moral line, to recollection dear,—
Whose magic virtue might at once arrest
The present harm, and point to future rest!—
His mental pow'rs absorb'd in stoic lore,
His body sinks, alas! to rise no more.
When life's proud vessel, thus, is tempest tost,
The rudder (reason) gone,—then all is lost!
Yes,—such the dire result, one daily views
Of those, who gifted, mental pow'rs abuse,
By vain endeavours, fearlessly to scan,
How independent of his God is man!
Vain man, that calls his transient life his own;
That, which of all is most uncertain, known,
Yet, thinks 'tis his, at his free will t' enjoy,
His own to keep, to cherish or destroy!
And on this fragile argument beside,
Attempts to prove the right to Suicide!
Ah! dire mistake! O that the feeling muse,
Would thro' these lines the potent aid diffuse,

Sublimely smile, thro' this, my humble metre,
What zeal makes sweet, let genius make still
sweeter :

Proud man shall then give o'er the murth'rous strife,
Nor longer claim disposal of his life.
Or putting nature, virtue, sense, aside,
Ne'er sacrifice its hopes to Suicide ;
Nor thence, inverting order's sacred laws,
Sin against nature, and the great First Cause.
Or throw the veil of phrenzy o'er a deed,
Which is a crime, by God and man agreed.

And thou, lone spirit ! who still hover'st near
The fatal flood, increas'd by life's last tear,
Still gliding up and down the streamlet's bank,
Where death's self-sought but bitter draught you
drank,

Oh, bear me witness to the wond'ring world,
Of all the truths that here I have unfurl'd.
Tell them, thou see'st thy dreadful error now,
And that which tempted you you disavow ;
Tell them, when Lethe's stream you thought to
kiss,

You drown'd, what sorrow *was*, and ah ! what com-
fort *is*.

Peace to thy shade, departed, yet in view,
Whene'er thought pictures beauty ; such were you.
Now, sure, I see her tear the willow's bough,
That hangs deceitful o'er the wave below :
Like her seducer, pointing to a bed,
Where those who sleep in peace, must wake in
dread.

He from her arms rush'd, when in grief she 'woke,
For help she caught the willow's branch, and that,
too, broke !

ARGUMENT II.

This life our station, (appointed by heaven) proved by the duties attached to it: we must not quit it without divine order and permission, but patiently endure our existence, whether annexed to happiness or affliction.—Man's appointment not local, but relating to the performance of those duties, in which, whilst properly engaged, he is at his station, wherever his necessities may place him in the world.—The criminalty of Suicide is therefore not in quitting life, but in quitting the duties attached to it. That those duties are marked out for him, his mental and corporeal abilities are an evidence.—We are not placed here by accident, but for some wise end.—Man's blindness to the future is next stated as a further evidence of the intention of heaven, that he should not quit his station in life, until the duties annexed to it are complete;—of course a strong inference is also drawn therefrom, of God's disapproval of Self-murder, and its consequent criminality; as, by the deed, man acts in direct disobedience to his Creator's purpose, the due performance of which is of such consequence, and the crime of averting it, of course, so great, that, although man is endowed with wisdom to understand the divine law as well as that of nature, yet he is blind to the future; lest, foreseeing the miseries attendant on his progress through life, he should be tempted to commit Self-murder in order to avoid them, and by that means invert the order of Providence and the purpose of his being.

THIS LIFE OUR STATION, APPOINTED
BY HEAVEN, WITHOUT WHOSE OR-
DER AND PERMISSION WE MUST NOT
QUIT IT.

WHATE'ER the lot of human nature is,
Whether to pain allied, or mark'd with bliss;
This one conclusion's evident and sure,
Mankind with patience must that lot endure.
Smooth, as he may, the path he's meant to run,
But ne'er by guilty means his station shun:
For guilty means they must be, that give ease,
In spite of Nature and of God's decrees.
For, life's the post by heaven assign'd to man,
Which he must keep, as bravely as he can;
A post he ne'er impatiently must leave,
Till he shall orders from above receive.
And that is not, when by self-murder's force
He basely dies, but in fair nature's course,
Or by fell accident, disease, or war,
Or by the means of justice, or of law.
By that death only, man obeys God's call
When in the act he's not the principal:
For, when life feels in nature's course a pause,
'Tis heav'n's high order, thro' some second cause.
But man, by Suicide, acts principal alone,
And rashly quits this life, by orders of his own;
And thus he errs, for none their post may leave,
Until divine permission they receive.
But mark me,—man is not hereby design'd,
Should to the town he's born in be confin'd:
The warrior, whether on his native shore,
Or distant seas he boldly wanders o'er;
Whether in town encamp'd, or on the coast,
Still, you must own, he's fairly at his post.

Thus, of man's action, this wide world's the sphere,
 There he may go, where it may best appear;—
 Either in city, field, or on the seas,
 Urg'd by necessity, or choice, or ease.—
 Within the call of duty, he is still,
 Still in the circle nature bids him fill;
 Still at the post by allwise heav'n design'd,
 Whilst to his duty he is well inclin'd.
 But he, that quits this life by Suicide,
 From Nature and his duty turns aside;
 Far out of hearing, he's beyond the call
 Either of duty, love, affection, all:
 There lies the blame attach'd to Suicide;
 Man quits the duty, to his post allied.
 The soldier, thus, when he his post deserts,
 The law's dire sentence full on him reverts,
 Not that his sentry-box he basely quits,
 But he his duty wickedly omits.—
 Thus, with the Suicide, the blame too lies,
 Not that from life—but he—from duty flies.

That life's our post, can there exist a doubt?
 Since, why are duties 'specially mark'd out?
 Hence, some find occupation,—some employ;—
 Life's tædium by amusement some alloy:—
 To him, who 'tis assign'd to till the soil,
 Why form his limbs so suited to the toil?
 To him, ordain'd to lead a life of leisure,
 Why gives the nerves, the papillæ of pleasure?
 To him, who pries into the maze of art,
 Why mental genius for that end impart?
 This life's our post, by heav'n decreed, 'tis clear,
 Since none by accident are station'd here;
 Nor is our life, however mean, in fine,
 Without some moral object, end, design.
 Think you man comes into this world to try
 Merely to eat and drink, to sleep and die;
 As well might we suppose the moon's pale light
 Merely a lamp to guide the world at night.

When heav'n gave man existence, he gave too
 Some wise employ, some useful task to do;

If, before ev'ning, nature's aim you meet,
And your day's work you have perform'd complete ;

Rest patient the remainder of the day,
And not because you've done, thus go away !
For still to him, who wisely plac'd you here,
The option's left, to let you disappear.

But who can boast his duty's done to day ?
Or that he long enough has liv'd can say ?
Oh none !—on him, ah then ! what guilt must fall,
Who quits this life, unclaim'd by nature's call !

God's orders they resist, his pow'r deny,
Who say they are at liberty to die !
True, we to heav'n belong when we are dead,
Still we are his, when in the tomb low laid ;
Yes, when we slumber in death's silent state,
At his command, still rev'rently we wait :
But are those duties done, enjoin'd to do ?—
Or to the grave's foot will they follow you ?
Ah, no ! beyond the precincts of the tomb,
Not diff'rent forms alone shall we assume,
With diff'rent lives, there's diff'rent duties too,
And diff'rent senses, those duties to pursue :
Our pow'rs immortal, so must action be,
After the scale of immortality.

But of all arguments to truth most dear,
Man's blindness to the future proves, most clear,
That, life's our post,—appointed, too, by heav'n,
And in its course each has some duty giv'n ;
To quit that post,—that duty to neglect,
By self-destruction, is a crime direct !

Yes, they who can by chemistry descry
The secrets that in nature's store-house lie ;—
They, whose optics can new worlds explore,
And read therein the glory they adore,—
Whose minds, the latent springs of life can trace,
Whose hearts know what is good and what is base ;
Yes, tho' in thought inspir'd,—in action great ;—
Man is too blind to read the book of fate.

To him, whose eyes the book of life's expos'd,
The page of fate in mystery is clos'd:
Most wisely so; for, was vain man aware,
Of those fell suff'rings he is doom'd to bear,
Or able by prescience to foreknow,
The mis'ries here he must abide below,
Impatience, then, might tempt him to the crime,
Of quitting life before th' appointed time;
And thus his Being's purpose, end, and aim,
Might frustrate at the shrine of fear and shame.
For this grand end,—tho' vast the human mind,
Man, to the future, is entirely blind.

What greater proof, by nature, can be giv'n,
That Suicide is not approv'd by heav'n;
But that life's circle we should run complete,
Whatever evils we therein may meet?
Yes, against Suicide, a proof divine,
In blindness to the future, we define.

ARGUMENT III.

Man is the only animal that commits Self-murder.

—Nature does not sanction the crime, by any precedent in her works.—The animal creation teaches man more useful lessons:—some of them briefly described: they particularly teach us self-preservation, not self-destruction. Nature revolts at the bare mention of the deed, which is a proof of its criminality, as what she shudders at must be wrong, unnatural, and unjust, as well as contrary to her inclination and prejudicial to her welfare. The love of life an universal principle:—it is placed in the scale of life to outweigh all the prejudices against it, and thereby evinces nature's disapprobation of Suicide, as, to avert that crime, and that man might perform his duties in the world, are the chief reasons this love of life is so powerfully impregnated in the human system. If the act was lawful, too, it might be universal; nature of course cannot sanction it, as she would thereby defeat her own purposes. Man not born for himself only;—nature and man have mutual dependence on each other;—suicide averts the utility of that dependence: here again an inference is drawn, that nature cannot sanction the act, as she therein would be her own and worst enemy,—since it inverts her laws as well as all order, &c. The potent principle of self-love likewise argues her disapprobation of the deed,—implanted in the human breast for the same wise purpose as love of life;—to render the latter more efficient, it is always accompanied by hope.

THE ACT OF SUICIDE UNSANCTIONED BY NATURE.

MAN is the only animal, we find,
That preys without distinction on his kind ;—
So, he alone, (tho' Nature's boasted pride,)
Of all things living, commits Suicide.
If one crime he loves, of course the other,
Who spares not self will not spare his brother.

Nature's doctrines man may in vain explore,
He cannot lay the crime at Nature's door.
No such example he in brutes discerns,
But rather lessons of pure wisdom learns :]
Frugality he studies from the ant ;
The bee proves industry the foe of want ;
Whilst, in the dissipated drone, he sees
Their fate who live in idleness and ease.
The bee, the pow'rs of chemistry, too, shews,
From pois'nous herbs extracts the balmy dew.
The nautilus, to teach him how to sail,
Unfurls its lucent membrane to the gale ;
The shell its boat, with its two arms it rows,
And thus to man the use of oars it shews ;
He, by the polypus, the vessel steers,
Taught by th' excrescence that its back uprears ;
He architecture from the beaver knows ;
The spider too the art of weaving shows,
Draws parallels, e'en by the eye alone,
Thus hath the pow'r of innate judgement shewn ;
The dove displays the worth of constancy ;
The dog, the virtues of fidelity.
Parental love, he vieweth in the hen,
(In that most brutes superior are to men.)

From the stupendous elephant, e'en he
A lesson learns of real humanity ;
Who, as he fearless stalks along, descries,
Where man's weak offspring in his pathway lies ;
His huge proboscis shakes aloft in air,
And turns aside, thus seeming to declare,
" No harm shall thy sweet innocence befall,
" The world is fully wide enough for all."
These oft the means of sacred acts define,
Account through Nature too for things divine.
Thus, in the silkworm's life, explain'd we have,
The nature of man's triumph o'er the grave.
In that display'd alike man's progress is ;
Death, resurrection, hope of future bliss !
When from the egg the silkworm is unfurl'd,
Helpless, like us, it comes into the world :
E're it arrives at its most useful state,
It several changes must in life await.
It then begins to spin those silks we prize,
And spins, as we may say, until it dies.
In its next state it so inactive keeps,
That, if not dead,—at least we say, it sleeps.
The silk wound off, behold the worm—incas'd,
Now in a shell—as in a coffin plac'd ;
And, in that state, continues for a time,
Until in Nature's course, and call sublime,
It quickens in new life,—renew'd in breath,
Bursts from its tomb and breaks the bars of death !
Lo ! ushers forth, to our astonish'd view,
In form more bright, more glorious, and new.
That creature, once a sickly, palled, worm,
See, rob'd in shining white, its lucent form !
That creature, which once crawl'd upon the ground,
Now flies aloof, and roves in air around ;
And, as it buoyant in the sun-beam plays,
Regeneration's wond'rous pow'r pourtrays ;
The glory too of new-created bliss,
At once as grateful as it wond'rous is.
Man's progress this,—he's but a humble worm,
Comes in the world as weak and nude in form ;

Ere at his useful state arriv'd, we know,
He many changes too must undergo,
From those diseases that to man's lot fall,
By education too still more than all ;
He then, when fit, begins to toil for bread,
Nor ends his destin'd labour until dead.
Still, like the silkworm, when he dies you find,
He leaves the profits of his toils behind.
By pride adorn'd, immortal seem'd his form ;
But, ah ! unwind him, and he's still a worm ;
And, in his coffin, as in state he lies,
Seems but a human chrys'lis to our eyes.

Awhile entomb'd he sleeps, — the time arrives ;
The trumpet sounds, — and, lo ! again he lives !
First quicken'd in corruption, where he lies,
Behold him in more glorious form arise,
Array'd in robes of pure and shining white,
He soars aloof, and dares the realms of light !
There in the nameless extacy to burn,
Of love unspeakable and bliss eterne.
Thus, in a humble worm, we e'en descry,
Man's course through death unto eternity.

The glorious change that in the worm we learn,
We, by the microscope, may best discern ;
So, man's exalted triumph over death,
They best can see who wisely look through faith !

Ah, yes, from brutes, these useful lessons flow,
Life's noblest uses unto them we owe.
Self-preservation too they teach beside,
But none have taught man desp'rate Suicide.
Tho' Nature, that grand magnet of the soul,
True to its point let what dire tempests roll ; —
That magnet which, midst elemental war,
E'er points to truth, bright reason's polar star, —
Tho' Nature's self, with virtue for her creed,
Shrinks at the thought and shudders at the deed ; —
Yet man the hoards of sophistry has rack'd,
And dares attempt to justify the act.
Why, when the tale of Suicide is told,
Scarce beats the pulse and runs the blood so cold ?

Why doth the heart with nameless horror bleed,
If Nature hence approv'd the wicked deed?
That which is consonant to Nature's laws,
Neither of dread or pain is it the cause.
Our food, our rest, our exercise, and ease,
Design'd by Nature, ever sure to please.
But, see what dread self-murder's name imparts,
How Nature shrinks, turns pale, and wildly starts.
She shrinks at Suicide,—and what she shrinks at must
Be base, unnatural, unholy, and unjust.
To self-persuasion, whate'er pow'rs belong,
What Nature shudders at must still be wrong.
Tho' passions tamper, all her fears to soothe,
Nat'ral emotion ever speaks the truth.

If o'er the heart, grief has such influence gain'd,
That hence consent to Suicide's obtain'd,
Think not from Nature the consent doth rise,
'Tis Pride that asks, 'tis Folly that replies.

Nature's a book, thro' whose bright pages beam
Wisdom and truth, penn'd by the Great Supreme.
No light yield they, man's erring steps to guide,
Thro' the dark vale of desp'rate Suicide.
But, in life's scale, a power Nature lays,
Which its worst prejudice at once outweighs.
Ay, yes,—to counteract the selfish strife,
She planted in man's breast the love of life.

Self-preservation has a natural cause,
But self-destruction thence no inf'rence draws.
Contempt of life with Nature's nought to do,
The love of life is natural, 'tis true,—
So deeply planted in the human breast,
A proof it stands 'gainst Suicide confest.—
If Nature meant to sanction base despair,
Why plant the love of life with such wise care?
Under the worst affliction, pain, or want,
This love of life is most predominant.
Within, an appetite as strong and great
As hunger does for nat'ral food create.
All other passions with our youth must cease,
But this increases as our years increase.

The love of life's an universal plan,
By Nature giv'n to fish, fowl, beast, and man.
The meanest insect in the vast creation
Has instinct giv'n for self-preservation.
In man — the love of life a passion grows,
Strong as that love whence propagation flows.
Of sexual love the counterpart defin'd,
Alike the species to preserve design'd ;
To counteract the desolation too,
Which would without it certainly ensue ;
For soon at end this goodly world would be,
If for each pain or trifling misery,
Man, with impunity, from rage or pride,
Might sacrifice his life to Suicide.
Ah! such the case, — if lawful was the deed,
For where's the man who has not pain or need,
Or disappointment quite enough t'excuse,
Of this extremity the desp'rate use.
Yes, if the act from guilt was really free,
Who knows but it might universal be ;
And the whole world, lamenting their sad doom,
Might to one desp'rate resolution come ;
— Just (1) as the Cimbrian women did of yore,
When dire defeat their husbands from them tore ;
Their keen regret, unable then to bear,
They hung themselves, by thousands, in despair ?
Oh let none say — self-murder's base resource
Does not avert great nature's genial course !

This truth in nature's volume is unfurl'd : —
This world's for man — and man is for the world.
For man is fattened the sprightly fawn,
For which man toils to cultivate the lawn.
The ox that pampers and that ploughs for you,
Lives on your bounty and your labour too.
Man would be lost without the world's employ,
Its uses, purposes, are all his joy.
Lo, also man, — without the aid of thee,
The world would soon a worthless desert be ;
The seeds of beauty, form, utility, —
All lost in primal dark chaosity,

Subject to man, all nature's uses are ;
 Her efforts too depend on human care.
 Consid'ring which—who vainly can assert,
 Self-murder does not nature's plan avert ;
 Or say of no more harm it is the source
 Than (2) merely turning of a river's course ;
 The river turn'd must be a river still,
 And yet may flow in many a useful rill.
 Changing its course, like breathing of a vein,
 Is but to make it better flow again ;
 But when by hands of wicked suicide,
 Life's purple current's vainly turn'd aside,
 In the dark caverns of the grave it flows,
 And where 'tis seen no more, unheard of, goes.

Ah yes!—by Suicide, hence prove, we may,
 Man's purpose is for ever done away ;—
 Nature's fair aim the desp'rate act annoys,
 Its course not only alters, but destroys ;
 Perverts all motive, human or divine,
 All justice, order, and all discipline.—
 It makes uncertainty still more unsure,
 Disorder worse disorder'd, past all cure.
 Can nature sanction Suicide and be
 Thus to herself the greatest enemy ?
 Man is a link, in nature's endless chain,
 Which he alone may break who well can mend
 again.

Oh ! let none say self-murder is no crime,
 It mocks the mandates of the Great Sublime.
 He who inverts thus order's sacred laws,
 Sins against Nature and th' eternal cause.

Nature, her hate of Suicide to prove,
 In man's breast planted too that pow'r, self-love:
 For no mean purpose given, you will find,
 But 'mong the all-wise uses whence design'd,
 Lest man in self should view no real delight,
 Might careless grow, and thus his duty slight ;
 Lest finding in himself no hope or joy,
 He might grow sad and thus himself destroy.

Self-love was giv'n, that he himself might prize,
Too well, his life, to basely sacrifice.

Hence, for the same wise purpose too we find,
Self-love and love of life in man combin'd.

Yes, both to prove that Nature rather meant,
T' avert the crime than give it her consent.

The love of life, so wisely plac'd within,
Sufficient proves of Suicide the sin.

Its blest effects thro' endless ages shine,

And, by its virtue, shews it is divine.

Still more to prove God plac'd it in the breast,

'Tis of all passions most supremely blest ;

For, under circumstances most extreme,

'Tis wisely order'd, by the Great Supreme,

That Hope its course shall constantly attend,

At once its surest guide and kindest friend.

When sorrow damps the fond desire to live,

Hope shall new fire unto the passion give.

Under the lash, most keen, of sorrow's rod,

It whispers comfort, and still points to God !

Hail ! love of life, by nature wisely giv'n,

That man may fill the grand design of heav'n :

Hail ! Hope, that makes life's bitt' rest cup yet
sweet,

That none may dash it, ere its draught's complete,

ARGUMENT IV.

Our religion does not sanction Self-murder. — The falsely-asserted silence of the Bible on the subject, improperly esteemed an objection in favour of the act. — Instances deduced, wherein that silence does not appear so evident. — The sixth commandment in particular is a divine canon against the crime. — Instead of despair under affliction, the scriptures enjoin patience and resignation; and that we may endure our sufferings on earth, they also inspire us with the hope of future bliss. In which injunctions, a disapprobation of suicide is certainly to be inferred. — Moreover, instead of trusting to the effect of self destruction, for relief under pain and misery, we are told to put our trust in heaven alone; — although the gospel does not in direct terms denounce the crime of Suicide, yet, in the patient lives of the apostles and its professors, it receives a complete denial: — had they considered the act lawful and consistent with their faith, they would not have borne such indispensible sufferings, when they might have found such instant relief in Suicide. — Our Saviour's patient life is a direct treatise against it. Scriptures also enjoin a due performance of the duties of our being, and strict obedience to the laws, — thus of course declare the criminality of Suicide, it being in direct opposition to the law, — and serving rather to shun duty than fulfil it; they also prove the act is criminal, as far as by calling death to our aid just as we please, it certainly is an usurpation of a right that belongs to God alone. — The votaries of religion have set no example of the deed. — Religion therefore establishes its criminality.

THE ACT OF SUICIDE UNSANCTIONED BY RELIGION.

RELIGION favour suicide ! — why not ?
'Gainst it, the Bible not a word has got.
Yet, in that sacred book, what text e'en says,
One sentence, indirectly, in its praise ?
For scarce a virtue but it recommends,
It's silence, then, to condemnation tends.

Various, tho' few, the deeds that book records,
Whose motive, in their favour, nought affords ;
On him the pond'rous gall'ry Sampson drew,
And thus, for mere revenge, himself he slew ;
Next royal Saul becomes a suicide,
And sacrifices virtue to his pride ;
Ahithophel commits the crime accurst,
Impell'd by envy and most foul disgust ;
And Judas has (a prey to black remorse)
To ignominious suicide recourse.

Each act thus nam'd, what language censures more,
Than thus to trace the crime, at vice's door ?

But plainer still, I'll venture to engage,
Against the action, speaks the sacred page.

Jonah, his griefs unable to endure,
Ask'd of his God a death-bed premature ;
When, in the language of the true sublime,
Thus, by the motive, he condemns the crime :

'Dost thou well to be angry ? — God replied : —
Answer that question, friends of suicide ;
Surely that act you will no longer prize,
The virtue of whose motive heav'n denies !
E'er angry with his lot, you find each suicide,
To be thus angry is it well ? Jehovah cried. —

And in the sacred page you'll find, if trac'd,
 "His canon 'gainst self-murder," God has plac'd ;
 (3) "Thou shalt not kill:" thus saith the law of
 heav'n ;

On Sinai's mount, to Israel's leader giv'n.
 Ye sceptics then, who say that suicide
 Is not by sacred evidence denied, —
 What plainer proof, what stronger reason still,
 Than that assertion, "Man,—thou shalt not kill."

The scriptures, too, in language truly plain,
 Prove man was born to trouble and to pain ;
 Nor that sad truth alone, declare, you find,
 But that his pains he should endure, resign'd.
 Say,—does self-murder this command obey :
 Against the crime, don't heav'n's injunctions lay ?

'Tho' to shun evil man has just pretence,
 He cannot quit life's destined station thence ;
 For since it seems pain is by heav'n design'd,
 Life is not evil, when therewith combin'd ;
 There is no evil in affliction's rod,
 Goodness alone can be deriv'd from God.
 Besides, our woe his fond affection proves,
 For, lo ! th' Almighty chast'neth those he loves :
 Thus pain's the mark of heav'nly favour, saith our
 faith ;

We should be proud of it, not cancel it by death.

Thus, under grief, says scripture, be resign'd
 To him, whose pow'r is great as he is kind,
 And, when Job felt afflictions iron rod,
 The foul fiend whisper'd, "die and curse your
 God !" —

Surpris'd amid the anguish that he wept,
 Still his integrity he nobly kept ;
 "What, dost thou still retain thy purity?"
 Exclaims his wife, "nay, curse your God and die."
 What can prove more the virtue patience shews,
 Or heav'n's contempt of suicide disclose ?
 'Tis good to live, and patient bear woe's rod, —
 To kill yourself, it is — to curse your God.

Daniel condemn'd,—ah! tell me, did he then,
 By suicide escape the lion's den?
 Would he have brav'd the monsters hungry jaws
 Had he not thought the action 'gainst the laws?
 Did Shadrach and his comrades in dismay,
 Shun the fell flame, by foul self-murder's way!
 The fiery path, to death would they have trod,
 Had they thought suicide approv'd by God?

To God alone, saith scripture, look for aid,
 On him alone, let all your trust be laid;
 Do not such high commands imply, in course,
 Man in self-murder should not seek resource?
 Can he with patience on his God await,
 Who seeks by suicide to mend his state?
 Their hope in heav'n do they place in chief,
 Who thus in death alone seek vain relief?
 Instead of bending to a power divine,
 Do they not bow to suicide's base shrine?
 Instead of trusting to their God alone,
 A deity they set up of their own;
 A god whose aid they impiously implore,
 By rites of blood, as heathens did of yore:
 Ah! yes,—a god from whose foul altar's rise,
 Off'rings of human flesh in sacrifice.

Lo! above all, t'encourage man thro' life,
 Suff'ring beneath the woes of mortal strife;
 And rather cheerfully his lot endure,
 Than seek relief, by death too premature:
 The scriptures promise that a future state,
 Of bliss hereafter, shall the soul await;
 Yes,—they point out, the only hope that's sure,
 Thus prove that pain should be and man endure;
 Why promise man a future state of bliss,
 But he may patient bear his lot in this?
 Why an eternity of joy ensure,
 But that he may life's few hours pain endure?

Jesus and his apostles, sceptics say,
 Among the crimes committed in their day;
 No notice take of hopeless suicide,
 Nought in the gospel 'gainst it is implied.

Ah! tho' their gospel no denial gives,
 Don't they deny it in their holy lives?
 Did they not bear scorn, ignominy, shame,
 The rack, the cross, the poison, and the flame?
 Say, — would they thus have borne both pain and
 grief,

If they thought Suicide a just relief?

Oh, would you better have this truth unfurl'd,
 Learn then of him, the Saviour of the world:
 His blessed life, devoid of selfish pride,
 Is the best treatise against suicide:

From him we learn, this patient way to live,
 To bear and forbear,—give and to forgive;
 Scorn'd and rejected and the prey of grief,
 He in no selfish means obtain'd relief:
 Sooner than die for self alone we find,
 He fondly died for us and all mankind.

Scripture enjoins a due performance too
 Of all those duties, man is born to do;
 But live the longest life of man e'er known,
 Still there is left some duty quite undone;
 So kind is heav'n, since so weak is man,
 God is content if he does what he can;
 But how can suicide such kindness crave,
 If he from duty shrinks into his grave.
 Who, deaf to nature and to duty's call,
 Strives not t'obey or answer it all;
 Can he presume his God to fairly meet,
 Whose life as well as duty's incomplete?
 The purest saint, that virtue's path has trod,
 Still thinks himself unfit to meet his god.
 And shall self-murder push his gory head,
 Anear that throne, where angels scarce dare tread!

Nor scripture only saith, thy duty do,
 Religion's vot'ries set th' example too,
 Or why thus strive to make their lives complete,
 Still thinking they're unfit their god to meet?
 Tho' painful oft the task to them assign'd;
 They do their duty with a cheerful mind;

E'en the Messiah yields to duty's claim,
And lo ! fulfils the grand design for which he came ;
Tho' to his aid might come all heav'n's countless
host,

(4) Nor till he said, " 'twas finish'd," gave he up
the ghost.

If thus religion saith, your duty do,
Say, vain self-murd'rer, can it foster you,
You, who cut short the circle mark'd by heav'n,
And shun the duties that therein are giv'n ?

Since, too, the crime's forbidden by our laws,
Religion 'gainst it hath a farther clause ;
For strict obedience scriptures e'er enjoin,
To human laws as well as those divine,
That unto man, life's use secur'd may be,
With law, religion, acts in unity :
Dost not religion too her voice combine
To prove the power o'er life a right divine ?
Not only " render what to Cæsar's due,"
But what " belongs to God," say scriptures too,
Hath not religion here again denied,
The base unlawfulness of suicide ?
For when o'er life vain man usurps the rod,
Usurps he not what but belongs to God ?
The power of giving life is his alone,
Sure his sole right to take it you will own :
To god alone belongs the power of death,
Don't he usurp it who ends his own breath ?
Yes,—'gainst the act, thus speak the scriptures do,
" E'er render unto God what unto God is due :"
Surely a text which thus directly says,
Cannot encourage that which disobeys.

Ah, no ! religion yields no specious light,
To lure a spirit in clandestine flight,
Nor have its vot'ries an example giv'n,
That Self-destruction is approv'd of heav'n.
In the proud list of martyrs to its cause,
None in its favour an objection draws ;
Condemn'd, in flames, to yield their latest breath,
None ever once anticipated death ;

Sooner than shun its pangs by shameful flight,
They met their flames and gloried in the sight,
So little thus religion hides the shame,
But rather tends to deeper fix the blame;
Unless 'tis that religion which is coin'd,
To suit the purpose of its votary's mind.
Now, tho' I say not what religion's best,
That sure is worst, fram'd for self-interest.

ARGUMENT V.

To him who disregards divine and natural evidence, the duty and obligation we owe society are set forth as a proof of the impropriety of Self-murder.—Man should live for the benefit of the world; he is not born for himself only: the self-love implanted in his breast is not to excuse him from mutual offices, but is intended as the source of all other love:—he is happy only as he makes others so—the social plan universal beginning in God.—Men depend upon one another's mutual help;—no excuse for quitting life on account of uselessness and inability;—a life, however wretched, has always some duty attached to it,—and a station however mean, or abilities however poor, have still some influence on the order and general welfare of society. Suicide shuns those social duties, and thus inverts the intention of man's being.—The invalidity of the assertion, that Self-murder, no more inverts natural and social order, than death obtained by any other course. A vain assertion, that, also, quitting life by suicide no more affects social order than going into retirement or solitude. Life is also given for our Creator's use;—dedicate it to him, and it will be ever well applied, as he is too wise to put it to improper use; the earnest care he takes of it is a proof of his exclusive right to the disposal of it;—and, instead of our destroying it, we should, as long as we can, dedicate it to his service.

THE ACT OF SUICIDE UNSANCTIONED BY SOCIAL ORDER.

BUT setting script'ral arguments aside,
An atheist must not commit suicide,
Unbiass'd by a supernat'ral cause,
He's still restrain'd by moral duty's laws.
Philosophy may dissipate the mist
That superstition causes to exist:
E'en religion's mild but potent sway,
From weaker minds its blaze may do away,
But never can annul that law, enjoin'd
In nature's code, to fix the erring mind;
So eas'ly understood that few but know
The obligation we each other owe:
For, lo! when all is gone that life can name,
Society upon us still has claim,
And, spite of those slight pleasures life can give,
The duty ow'd the world bids us to live;
Yes, tho' to self, no joy can life produce,
To others yet in hopes to be of use,
Man's bound by duties, whence 'tis base to swerve,
Long as he can, that life still to preserve.
For this grand axiom's plain to ev'ry one,
Man is not born but for himself alone;
In vain his right to serve himself to prove,
He pleads the pow'r of natural self-love.
Self-love was given for a nobler use
Than man from mutual offices t'excuse;
'Twas giv'n that he of self such care might take,
He might be thus preserv'd for friendship's sake,
Lest, seeing too in self no real delight,
He might grow careless and thus others slight.

From him, who for himself has no respect,
No due regard can other men expect.
Yes,—hence self love,—for God therein design'd,
The source of other love should be combin'd:
A special care of self to man decreed,
That he might thereby judge what others need;
And, in the deep concern he feels for woe,
What others feelings are, may thereby know.
The way to bliss, thus, social love we find,
If to be happy quite, man must be kind:—
For, lo! t'extend this social plan, 'twas best
That man by blessing only should be blest.
This truth in heav'n too we see unfurl'd, —
God, from self-love alone, loves all the world;
His joy, no partial love of one poor soul,
His wond'rous glory is—love of the whole!
Action thus is, and ends where it began,
In universal love of God and man;
Tend too the varied pow'rs of life and sense,
To fill one circle of benevolence.
Read o'er the book of nature, it will prove
We're all united by one chain of love.
Review the world, too, you therein will see
One universal vast society:
Tho' each by heav'n is more or less endu'd,
Our end and being is for mutual good.
The hen that careful rears for man her brood,
That man too labours to provide her food;
The dust man raises falls where seed is laid,
From whence spring trees that form for him a shade;
His acts, fresh atoms, daily too create,
To form his house, lo! atoms congregate.
But what's more clear in nature's social plan
Is this fair truth:—Mankind is made for man.
Our weakness proves that man should man assist,
How without mutual help can we exist?
Infantine helplessness asserts the claim,
Which in the bed of sickness is the same:
Thus the same sun, whose power all must crave,
Dawns in the cradle, sets but in the grave.

Hence, fond affection twines her sacred bands;
Hence, love joins hearts and friendship unites hands;
Hence human policy and interest,
Bind where no other tie can be possest.
Oh! why these ties, knit for life's mutual ease,
If man may break them just when he may please?
Why round the heart those sacred bands revolve,
If man, at pleasure, may those ties dissolve?
If just self-murder, why this social plan,
In God beginning, and which ends in man?
Thus suicide I justly may maintain,
Of social love and order is the bane;
The act's a breach of duty I contend,
Both to society and to your friend.
Shew me the man who thinks for self alone,
And says his death doth injury to none;
Does he forget he says so to a friend,
Whose sorrow must begin where his must end?
Does he forget the anguish he must feel,
When they the tidings of his death reveal?
Or if no friend, has he no relative,
Who in his smiles and actions us'd to live?
Or some companion, some kind neighbour too,
Who centre'd all their happiness in you?
Or if no relative demands your care,
In vain, your duty's done, you thence declare.
Look at the world;—still, there you'll find employ,
For man's not made for individual joy:
The world yclep'd society you'll find,
Still claims the vigour of your heart and mind;
For who can vouch, his duty's done to day?
Or that he long enough has liv'd can say?
Who hath his being's end misunderstood,
And saith he hath no power to do good?
Oh! live the life the oldest man hath run,
You'll find there's still some duty left undone.
Hence 'tis your duty virtuously to live,
Whilst there's a tear of sympathy to give:
Of all bereft, that comfort can produce,
Lo! to the world you yet may be of use;

Altho' those acts unable to dispense,
Of wond'rous use or great beneficence;
Still e'en the meanest action of our lives,
Of doing good some sweet occasion gives;
The happiness of others to promote,
If but to virtue we our means devote.
The look of sympathy may to the heart
Better relief than gifts of gold impart.
Virtuous example may more zeal enforce,
Than flows from any other gen'rous source:
In short, a man endow'd with worth innate,
However humble his external state;
His actions still, or mov'd by truth or sense,
O'er the world's order may have influence;
His life, tho' mean, when scann'd in nature's page,
May point a moral worthy of a sage;
For thus the precept that in virtue shines,
Excels in worth the rich Potosian mines.

Hence, none their uselessness in life can plead,
As an excuse for suicide's foul deed.

Besides, man is not a principal alone,
He oft acts second to some cause unknown;
Some wheel he touches, that he can't discern,
And gives to effort some surprising turn;
Tho' weak his pow'rs, yet in this unseen course,
He may give movement, tho' he can't give force.
The smallest drop that falls into the sea,
Is felt at its extremest boundary;
Its motion motion gives, until the whole,
In waves tremendous, but sublime, shall roll;
As all drop, thus, a second cause may be,
To that which wafts a navy 'cross the sea.
Man, tho' a drop too in the vast of space,
Gives life a motion which no thought can trace;
May tend perhaps to swell that very tide,
On which a peasant to a throne may ride.

Let none the fitness of these truths despise,
From small beginnings greatest deeds arise.
Life's smallest spark then that remains in man,
To useful flames the breath of truth may fan.

Life howe'er mean, — ah yes! in wisdom's eye
Some choice, some sweet, reflection may imply.
The bubble thus to a Newtonian sight,
Explains the law of colour, shade, and light.
Life is a bubble, mark'd by pain or bliss,
Yet view'd aright, at all times useful is;
Its humble state is not perhaps its worst,
When swell'd by pride more likely 'tis to burst.

In life's dark page, however mean man's lot,
He ne'er an error is, tho' oft a blot;
He's still the man, the destin'd being e'en,
Tho' (blurr'd by grief and folly,) dimly seen.
How weak soe'er in mind, in hand, or heart,
He still in life, may act some gen'rous part,
To, order God's first law, at least conduce,
And be, in nature's course, still of real use.
Whereas, the man, who aims at Suicide,
Both from his sphere and duty turns aside,
Basely inverts all order's sacred laws,
Thus sins 'gainst nature, and the great First Cause.
And say, shall man thus mock the pow'r sublime,
Yet dare assert, self-murder is no crime!

Some say, that Suicide's no more the source,
Of harm, than death by any other course;
And think the act inverts not order's laws,
More than death does by a natural cause.
Thus, if they err, in taking life away,
God too does wrong, in doing so, they say.
Ah! do they not the grand distinction see!
Frail is he as you, — are you as wise as he?
Well, let's for once by small things, great ones scan,
And providence weigh in the scale of man.
We know the harm done to society,
When men by their own efforts cease to be;
But when a man in nature's due course dies,
Can there be harm, for is not God all-wise?
Dead or alive, we know, man's still his care,
And where he breaks, he can again repair.
For tho' not bound for human acts t' attone,
He always will well justify his own.

When to another soil we plants remove,
 The proper season for it we must prove;
 And so with man, when he moves from life's sod,
 A proper time there is, known but to God.
 Yes, he well knows, and know he only can,
 When to remove that pride of nature, man;
 That which he planted, and in Eden grew,
 He knows when it will *bear* removal too.
 And, when he takes away, he can replace,
 By other beings, each vacated space.
 Man is a link in nature's endless chain,
 Which he may break, sure, who can mend again.
 His honour will not let there be defects,
 But what his wisdom to supply directs.
 Thus for his own acts heaven will provide,
 But not for those of selfish suicide;
 Never accountable will heaven be
 For man's base crimes or rash contumacy;
 Evil he may avert, 'tis understood;
 But ne'er make evil as a step to good.

He who, uncall'd, quits life by suicide,
 Perhaps, as useless he will lay aside,
 Too wise that stone to use again at all,
 That breaks, gives way, and lets the building fall.
 Yes, he will either cast it quite away,
 Or in some meaner spot the base tool lay.
 Oh! no such hopes attend on suicide,
 As those that cheer the man that fairly died.
 This acts in unison with order's laws,
 That to unerring purpose gives a pause.

Hence, tho' dissolv'd each tie that man can
 name,
 Still on his aid society has claim,
 And he in truth is guilty of a crime,
 Who dares to quit it 'fore the given time.

If so—he then, who solitude prefers,
 In social duty to the world, too, errs.
 Ah no! for by seclusion from the world,
 Life's choicest benefits have been unfurl'd;

The noblest efforts of the human mind
Have, in retirement, chiefly been design'd;
That which is great or lovely, wise or good,
Has been imagin'd first in solitude.

The mind, unbiass'd by exterior views,
In solitude a treble strength renews;
Exalted reason then, by fancy taught,
Uninterrupted, dares the maze of thought.
Thus solitude's society's best friend,
Whose company the brightest thoughts attend:
Like Cicero, a noble mind then own,
"Is never less alone than when alone."

In vain the act of suicide is view'd,
In the same light as useful solitude.
He who the path of solitude may choose,
Still to society may be of use.
But to that purpose suicide ne'er tends,
Man's usefulness then, with his being, ends;
From him no help society can have,
"There's no device or knowledge in the grave."

Yes, if 'tis only for the aid we give
To others, then our duty 'tis to live;
Proof to the atheist that 'gainst suicide,
But to the christian there is this beside.
Life's an instrument we should ne'er abuse,
For lo! 'tis giv'n for our creator's use;—
Aware of that, let's be with pride elate,
To think, to one so good 'tis dedicate,
For he's so wise, so good an architect,
His work he'll to the noblest use direct.

God's goodness is life's best security;
And the fond care he shews so frequently
Proves that the pow'r o'er life is his alone,
That man should not destroy it too, makes known;
Long as there's hope, it may employed be,
To heav'ns best service, praise and dignity.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

BOOK THE SECOND

Contains five Sections. The first of which proves the act of suicide to be contrary to the established law of the country. The second, declares it to be contrary to the dictates of virtue; and concludes with an affecting story of Celia and Menander. The third tends to evidence, that the act is unsupported by sense and reason. The fourth proves it to be rather an act of cowardice than courage. And the subject of the fifth and last Section is to convince, that the act, instead of proceeding from extreme sensibility and tenderness, is a direct evidence of extreme selfishness and insensibility.

ARGUMENT I.

The laws of this country forbid the act of suicide; of course, the infraction of the same tends to prove its criminality. The law both wise and just, as the ends of justice would be entirely done away, if sanction was given to an act so subversive of her beneficial institutions, and of social order. The very institution of justice proves its unlawfulness. If sanctioned even in criminals, it would operate as a door to innumerable other crimes.—The law as good in meaning and intent as that which constitutes wedlock:—both are designed for the preservation of the human species.—The law justified as far as it is founded on the sixth commandment in the Mosaic Code.—A divine Canon against murder in general.—Magistrates, &c. in the execution of a legal sentence, do not act against the letter of that law; nor is a man guilty in the eye of that law if he kills another by accident or war, for therein a man acts but as second cause.—The principal in the act is only guilty, and the suicide of course is one.—Although the law against the crime, which very properly pronounces it “Felo de Se,” is so far imperfect as to be incapable of punishing the offender, he is not less criminal in the eye of justice;—and, although in the grave he avoids human punishment, it is no reason he should escape divine justice, from whose eye sepulchral darkness never for a moment can conceal a crime.

THE ACT OF SUICIDE FORBIDDEN BY THE LAWS OF THE NATION.

HENCE, too, is suicide a crime, because,
It strictly is forbidden by the laws;
And where's the man, deem'd truly good or wise,
That can his country's sacred laws despise.
In love to them, great Socrates refus'd
To quit his prison, falsely tho' accus'd;
Tho' innocent, he could not so remain,
If freedom thus he basely should obtain.

Not the mere laws against the crime decreed,
All laws beside are broken by the deed;
Yea, universally it does away
The ends of justice in the open day:
The worst of crimes a man may perpetrate,
Nor fear the sentence that thereon may wait;
Condemn'd an ignominious death to meet,
He cuts his throat, and makes a safe retreat.
The threats of justice he may boldly brave,
Revel in crimes, then step into his grave;—
Into the worst extremes of baseness rush,
And in sepulchral darkness hide the blush;
Commit a deed, o'er all the earth unjust,
And hide beneath a little of its dust:
The beast of prey thus robs the peasant's birth,
And vengeance shuns by running to its earth.
How can self-murder be considered just,
That opes the door to crimes the most accurst!
Oh, no!—the action justice must disown,
E'en by the institution of her throne.

The sword of justice why with pow'r anoint,
 If to be parried with a bodkin's point?
 How are the ends of justice satisfied,
 If thus defeated by base suicide!
 Why make pris'ns strong, the wicked to enthrall,
 If by a pin man may break down the wall?
 Why chains of iron round his limbs revolve,
 If a small powder may those chains dissolve?
 Strange and prepost'rous must that reason be,
 That aught but criminal in th' act can see.

Nor condemn'd wretches, thence, are justified,
 Howe'er their fate seems worse than suicide:
 Tho' best it seems to die by hands their own,
 Than 'neath th' ignominious hangman's groan.
 'Twould set a bad example to mankind,
 And make the heart still more to vice inclin'd.
 They bend not to the sword that justice draws,
 Or by submission calm th' offended laws,
 For crimes atone nor expiate the offence,
 Nor for the act of grief shew proper sense.
 But to its heinousness lend added force,
 By tempting others to pursue their course;
 And e'en new crimes without remorse invent,
 Since they may thereby 'scape just punishment.

That law how just, that hence forbids the deed,
 By heav'n, by nature, or by man decreed.—
 Ah! just that law:—and do you still ask why?
 Since thence, you say, you do no injury,
 Or to yourself, your country, or your friends,
 Then where's the matter how your being ends?
 So might that nameless criminal declare,
 Whose deeds best veil'd in midnight darkness are;
 He thus the stings of conscience may disarm,
 By vainly saying, he to none does harm.
 But in that argument there's little force,
 Does he not injure thus fair nature's course?
 Like him—the Suicide infracts the laws,
 And on himself its sentence also draws.
 'Tis wisely thence, and justly too, decreed,
 That one in this world suffers for the deed.

And shall self-murder mar the views of Fate!
On him, hereafter punishment will wait;
For man is subject to a greater cause
Than matter, or mere motion's chance-like laws;
Let those who date their actions from that source—
Say, don't self-murder too mar nature's course?
Don't it the cause of procreation hurt,
Fair manhood's all-wise purpose to avert?

The law, that strives the base deed to prevent,
Is full as good, in meaning and intent,
As that which constitutes the marriage-tie,
Whose natural origin let none deny;
For that which operates in nature's cause,
Comes under head of nature's sov'reign laws.
As wedlock is t'increase the species meant,
So suicide's forbid, its ruin to prevent;
Both are design'd to second nature's cause,
And without either, nature feels a pause.
Hence human law forbids self-murder's knife,
And where it fails, then pleads the love of life.

And, be that law divine or human, still
'Tis founded on those words, "Thou shalt not kill;"
But this, some say, is but a law implied,
Not 'gainst the man who by his own hand died,
But against him who basely slays his brother,
Not when he kills himself, but kills another.
If 'twas a law in gen'ral terms decreed,
'Gainst taking human life, e'en then, indeed,
When criminals pay forfeit of their lives,
A stain their blood the robe of justice gives,
And guilty of their murder, hence we view,
The judge, the jury, and the hangman too;
These doom a man in certain death to bleed,
And that man executes the dreadful deed.
Nay, 'tis the nation's law that dooms their death,
Justice, thro' man, their condemnation saith.
Man but performs the sentence of the laws,
In which he acts but as a second cause;
As principal man is not in the act,
In doing what his country's laws enact;

The law 'gainst murder can denounce alone,
The principal, and suicide is one;
As much so too, as he who aims the knife,
That takes away a brother's sacred life:
And if the crime more horrid must appear,
As the relationship must be more near,
What crime can blacker than self-murder be?
What's more related to himself than he?

Passion's the main first cause that turns the wheel,
That moves the hopes and fears we mortals feel;
Thus, in an act where we no passion see,
The perpetrator is from guilt quite free;
Hence then the guilt of breaking murder's law,
Attaches not to accidents or war:
One being "second cause," pleads innocence,
The other in excuse pleads self-defence.
But no excuse can suicide make known,
He in the act is principal alone.
Thus 'gainst the man that shall his own blood spill,
That law's in force which saith, "Thou shalt not
kill."

Founded on that, our country has decreed,
A special law against the impious deed.
Though crimes in our imperfect state there are,
For which the laws in vain their force prepare;
Tho' darkling suicide's an action which
The far-stretch'd hand of justice cannot reach,
Think not the act less criminal, because
It thus evades the vengeance of the laws.
Guilty the thief, who justice shuns afar,
As him that stands arraigned at the bar;
And suicide, though hid behind the grave,
The guilty imputation cannot save.

Nor think, since here no punishment your fate,
You will not suffer in the future state;
Think not, because you 'scape the human rod,
You will evade the anger of your God.
No mortal frailty, no impure desire,
Can shake the efforts of his ven'geful ire;

No hiding-place, no dead or living state,
Can e'er elude th' unerring bolt of fate;
He arms his justice on a wiser plan,
Than impiously to be forestall'd by man.
Rather the more, self-murder has to dread,
Because he here escapes unpunished.
He who suffers in this world, e'en thence
In some degree doth expiate th' offence.
But, ah! no expiation is implied,
In what's perform'd by shameless suicide;
He, basely, in that very action dies,
Which laws both human and divine defies;
Nor answers the demands in nature's plan,
Nor satisfies the claims of God or man.

ARGUMENT II.

The act of Suicide does not originate in virtuous motives ; it is therefore unlawful.—It is directly opposite to the dictates of virtue.—There is no guilt in actions proceeding from a virtuous motive—Cases wherein Suicide is and is not criminal—The motive distinguishes its criminality—Life, no sacrifice, when devoted in a good cause—It only loses its consideration when a good and beneficial act is in contemplation.—Its worth depends on the good use we make of it.—However unhappy the lot of man, virtue points out the means of relief.—When existence is intolerable, let it be devoted to the service of his country, or in some generous act to save or serve a friend.—The virtuous motive thus may do away the crime.—Under this impression, and in cases of insanity, or where there is no consent of mind, the act of Suicide is not criminal, and in those cases only ; a particular instance of which is recorded in the Story that follows of Celia and Menander.

THE ACT OF SELF-MURDER NOT CON- SONANT TO VIRTUE.

IT'S very cause, in ev'ry age and clime,
Tends but to prove it is a penal crime.
For did it spring from virtuous motives first—
The act, however violent,—is just.
But ah! it springs from no such course you find,
For virtue genders constancy of mind;
And they possess not sure that envied gift,
Who 'gainst their lives destructive weapons lift;
But far from constant, thus the soul is too,
To its corporeal consort quite untrue,
By basely quitting it, before the time,
Agreed on, in the contract, most sublime,
Under the hand and seal of nature giv'n,
Sign'd by Omniscience, ratified by Heav'n!
In the proud structure of the human mind,
Virtue's the noblest ornament design'd:
Thereto, the glories of the arch belong,
Which when most press'd become more strong.
Yes, Virtue with such wond'rous pow'r is blest,
It stronger grows, as it is more oppress'd.
In it's mere self e'en finds support so great,
And gathers firmness in its own just weight;
E'en virtue thus, as human limbs at length,
From toil and action, gather added strength.
Man blest with that—with which he stronger grows,
As woes oppress—sure will not shun those woes!
Sure that, which thus enables him to bear
His mortal pains, ne'er leads him to despair;
Surely, when man takes virtue as his guide,
He ne'er will tread the paths of suicide!
Its pow'r, those very passions will restrain,
That tempt him to an act so base and vain;
Subdues that jealousy, disgust, and pride,
Whence spring the motives of the Suicide.

Virtue's the heav'n-form'd armour of the mind,
In which such rare protection is combin'd;
Arm'd with its sacred potent influence,
Amid the worst, man keeps his innocence.
When all, well-arm'd, well cloth'd, and warm,
Alike the brutal and the insect form;
Man tho' of animals the first and last,
Is naked born unto the bitter blast:
Yet he, with sense endow'd, with virtue blest,
Stands far superior to all the rest:
Virtue makes man, (tho' naked to life's rod,)
Above the brute, and next unto his God;
If ever independent form'd was he,
When arm'd his soul with virtue, it must be;
Sense too is great,—yet often flatter may,
But virtue never leads the heart astray;
When sense and pow'r, yea even all, are found
To yield to passion, virtue stands its ground:
'The slave of neither censure, or of praise,
No pride seduces it, no shame dismays;
It's pow'r resists the specious force of guile,
Alike the tempters and the tempting smile;
Can that to which such glories are allied,
Be said to sanction hopeless Suicide?
Can that, when griev'd, look up to heav'n alone,
A base-born hope in foul self-murder own!
Will that which can refuse life's noblest pride,
From pleasure's splendid cup too turn aside?
When tender'd at the awful vast expense
Of honour,—truth innate, and innocence:
O! will it seek from anguish to be freed,
By thus committing murder!—Dreadful deed!
And sacrifice the claims of man and God,
Merely t'escape affliction's transient rod!
Oh! none can say, that virtue is implied,
In acts of lawless desp'rate Suicide!
Nor in its precious precepts do we find
The least incitement to that act design'd:
Virtue, man's surest guide, beneath the sky,
Instructs him how to live,—ne'er bids him die.

The way to nobly bear his trouble shews,
 And not to basely sink beneath his woes ;
 Bids him endure his painful, chequer'd life,
 Not shun its temporary transient strife.
 True, with no common tongue it warns our hearts,
 Something within its blest commands imparts ;—
 A certain inward consciousness,—a glow,
 That warms the soul, when man looks cold on woe ;
 This soundless speech,—this silent eloquence,
 Instructs man more than all the dreams of sense ;
 Shews him the way life's sorrows to disarm
 Is to repel, and not to shun, their harm ;
 Gives patience too, which, tho' it may not cure,
 At least, enables him his wounds t' endure ;
 Relief to merit too, thus seems to tell,
 Is not to end a woe—but bear it well.

If these the precepts virtue deigns to give,—
 And bids mankind to bear his woes and live !
 Sure in the face of them the wretch must fly,
 Who dares presume by his own hands to die :
 And what is contrary to virtue must
 Unlawful be, unnatural, and unjust ;
 For virtue gives support to order's laws,
 Or mov'd by nature, or her great first cause.

Alas ! no virtue can self-murd'ers boast,
 Or in that crime they never had been lost ;
 They wanted that, which, in the storm of mind,
 Their wand'ring senses to one end could bind.
 Fair virtue,—that sheet-anchor of the heart,
 Alone such friendly comfort could impart :—
 That, howe'er high life's furious tempests roll,
 With genial impulse steadies still the soul ;—
 In safety keeps it, midst the waves of doubt,
 By hope within, averts the storm without.
 But he that hath not virtue at his call
 To calm his passions, must beneath them fall.
 Tho' all around may feel their fury dire,
 It is himself beneath them must expire !
 “ The whirlwind, tho' around its rage may spread
 'Tis in its centre that it is most dread.”

Yes, trace the cause that lures man to the crime,
You'll find it springs not from a source sublime.
From jealousy, rank cowardice, or pride,
Springs the chief motive of the Suicide;
An action thus, by wicked views accurst,
Is void of virtue, therefore, is unjust;
Had but the deed to virtue one pretence,
It would be fair, tho' mark'd by violence.
For as a judge, at once humane and wise,
Pardons the theft, whereby a fond son tries
His famish'd parent gen'rously to save,
Both from a painful and untimely grave,
So, the worst act, with mercy's eye is view'd,
If urg'd by motives—virtuous and good.
If aught can justify a Suicide,
'Tis in such acts, where virtue is allied;
In acts, in its pure cause display'd alone,
And where no selfish principle is known.
In virtue's cause, the meanest act's sublime,
The virtuous motive does away the crime:
As in the case of Decius, the brave,
Who self devotes, his country thus to save,
Not Cato so, he merely died at most,
Because to him his country's pride was lost;
Nor so those who could act the Roman part,
From slavish custom,—not impulse of heart;
Tho' men in custom find excuses may,
For them, like laws, they sometimes must obey!
But no such custom as was law in Rome,
In England's isle, points to self-murder's tomb!
E'er trod Lucretia in fair virtue's path,
And thus her death no condemnation hath;
The motive pure,—the act so free from vice,
It was at worst; but virtue over nice:
Honour and life she thought dependent friends,
Cease that to be, this soon its being ends.
Dido and Cleopatra,—royal pair!
Base in their lives, hence in their deaths unfair;
Prey of ambition, sensual lust, and pride,
They liv'd ignobly,—thus ignobly died!

Where there's no shew of virtue in our lives,
 No death whate'er a proof of virtue gives.
 Assassination Brutus once approv'd,
 No wonder he to Suicide is mov'd.
 To good, whate'er his motives might lay claim,
 Th' assassin surely mars the patriot's name.

Lucretia too for death has this pretence,
 T'attest her honour, and her innocence:
 "I'm innocent at heart,"—she seeming cried;
 Seal'd with a poinard the fair truth, and died!
 No such rare proofs of honour grace our times,
 Men rather by their deaths expose new crimes.

Arria, to save a tender husband pain,
 Did not the pangs of self-sought death disdain;
 But no such kindness our self-murd'ers shew,
 Their deaths prevent not but encrease our woe.

Strozi, of *Florence*, for the public good,
 By his own hand, most bravely shed his blood;
 He in a bold conspiracy engag'd,
 Which public welfare virtuously presag'd;
 Seiz'd on suspicion,—when his foes declare,
 The rack's dire torments he should surely bear;
 Conscious, when tortur'd, he the secret may
 From human weakness fearfully betray,
 Sooner than have so good a project marr'd,
 Which for such gen'ral welfare was prepar'd,
 He nobly, by the act of Suicide,
 And in a virtuous cause,—most fairly died!

In acts of virtue,—in such acts, alone,
 The charge of guilt, may Suicide disown:
 Consideration life can only lose,
 When well devoted to a virtuous use.
 But life, however blest, is dearly bought,
 If at th' expense of but one virtuous thought;
 Life's value (whate'er aid kind nature lends)
 On the good use we make of it depends.
 Life of itself, is nothing,—a mere dream!
 And but while well-employ'd can something seem.

Whate'er the lot of human nature is,
 Virtue, at all times, points the way to bliss

However mark'd by pain, by woe, or grief,
In virtuous actions there is some relief.
To him, whom this life yields no pleasant days,
Tir'd of existence, there are many ways
Whereby (without the crime of Suicide)
He may get rid of it,—nor wound his pride :
Let him devote it to his country's good,
And at the shrine of duty shed his blood !
Duty so sacred, that when all is gone,
His country has a claim, he can't disown.

Britons those lives should never throw away,
For which their country have occasion may ;
The laurel too, that fades on wisdom's brow,
May on the soldier's in new verdure grow ;
The daring arm, that can a sword employ,
Is not to make a villain, but destroy.
Plung'd in thine heart, tho' innocent before,
Thou can'st be innocent—alas ! no more !

A life too lost, ne'er had more glorious end,
Than in some gen'rous act to save a friend,
Or in some useful, daring, enterprize,
Where death's an honour—heroes ne'er despise.
A life when lost in actions so sublime,
The virtuous intent does away the crime ;
Nought else can justify a Suicide,
A crime in every other act beside ;
Save when the deed is not directly meant,
Or when it does not share the heart's consent :
(For there's no guilt in actions undesign'd,
Or when they have not the consent of mind.)
Save too, where thoughtless madness points the way,
Then a disease it is—the learned say.
Ah ! dire disease ! for which, no cure we have ;
Hence lovely Celia sought a wat'ry grave ;
Hence, was her lov'd Menander's bosom torn,
With ceaseless sorrow, for his mistim'd scorn,
Hence too the sigh, that rends the reader's heart,
When the sad tale he reads these lines impart.

CELIA AND MENANDER.

FAIR *Mary* Celia was her native hamlet's pride,
An aged parent's only hope and guide;
From her, by actions void of art or guile,
Many a youth sought sweet reward,—a smile:
Alike endow'd with charms that might engage
To fan the flames of youth, or cheer the snows of
age.

In vain, the offers of the rich and great,
Couch'd in warm terms, her lov'd consent await.
A heart that such rare truth at once combines,
Could not be purchas'd by Peruvian mines:
'Twas virtue gave it that intrinsic worth,
She scorn'd to sell it for the wealth of earth.

Among the suitors to a heart so rare,
Menander only found sweet favour there;
A youth, with such contingent virtues blest,
Her counterpart of truth he stood confest.
Form'd for each other, and for mutual bliss,
Perfection's sole distinction, briefly this:—
She was the rose-bud,—fragrant, soft, and fair,
Well stor'd with balm to ease the wounds of care;
He was the oak, majestic in his form,
That both could shelter from and stand life's storm.

Yet not for beauty only fam'd, but mind;
Whose pow'rs tho' varied, yet both use combin'd,
Her's the cool gale, the fainting sense to please,
His was the useful ordinary breeze.

A love of such choice elements combin'd
Might sure have promis'd bliss the most refin'd;
But ah! more perfect as life's joys may seem,
'They come the nearer to a baseless dream.
The brightest colours of the solar rays
Are those that aërial surfaces emblaze;

Whereas the beauties of the solid base,
 Dark shadows and protub'rances deface.
 Thus he, whose fondness angels might approve,
 Now sunk in all th' indiff'rence of love.

Say! what could thus fair Celia's charms de-
 range,
 As to effect this serious sudden change?
 Alas! that delicate reserve of mind,
 Which e'er with virtuous motive is combin'd,
 No longer gave her beauty added grace,
 But wanton openness usurp'd its place.
 Those thoughts, by modesty once closely veil'd,
 Are now by ev'ry wand'ring look assail'd:
 Those actions once by gentleness confin'd,
 Now seem to broad vulgarity inclin'd.

Menander, who well human nature knew,
 A greater fault in woman could not view;
 For time nor care could e'er reform disclose;
 So much the female mind is like the rose,
 Whose leaves (too wide unfolded) 'tis in vain,
 You strive its modest closeness to regain.

His cold disdain, alas! she could not brook,
 She saw the scorn that darted from his look:
 That look,—her heaven once,—now shot disdain,
 And heav'n's sure bolts ne'er strike the heart in
 vain!

Quick to the brain, the fatal fire ascends,
 Nor sorrows heart-wept tear to quench it tends;
 'Till on the throne of reason's empire vast,
 Despotic frenzy, frowning, sat aghast.

In life's tempestuous voyage her sire had seen
 Many a dreadful wreck the coast bestreen:
 Now old—kind heav'n spar'd him, (he was blind,)—
 Thus could not witness that worst wreck of mind;
 But ah! with pain the villagers oft view'd,
 Her maniac form, with stinging weeds bestrew'd
 Barefooted, all the day, she pac'd the vale,
 Each passer-by affecting with her tale.
 At night, she plac'd cool plantains on her breast,
 In hopes thereby to give it's tenant rest.

But, ah! in vain!—in vain she tore her hair,
To drag away the fiend that hover'd there:
For lo! too surely, it had seal'd her doom,
And led her to a sad untimely tomb!

Early one morn, 'ere yet had dawn'd the day,—
Unseen, she from her keeper stole away.
Swift to the lake with heedless steps she ran,
There to evade the cruel scorn of man.

“My only joy!” thus as she went her cry—
“Was once for him to live, and now for him to die.”
Arriv'd,—in frenzied attitude she stood,—
And smil'd at her reflection in the flood;

“An angel 'tis!” cried she,—“an angel view!”
'Twas like one, ~~like Mary~~ twas just like you.

The sun had ris'n, and on the glassy lake
Reflected its transcendant blaze and make;
There too appear'd the blue ethereal sky,
Which catching quick her frenzy-rolling eye,—
“See! see!” she cried, “'tis heav'n, sure, I see!
And yonder glorious orb its gate must be!”

Again her shadow in the lake descried,—
“An angel come to guide me, there!” she cried:
Her arms she stretches to the shadowy view,
The shadow seem'd to stretch its arms forth too,
Each act, to the delusion, gives fresh strength;
“Ah! What embrace me!—then,” she cries, at
length;—

“I come, fair seraph!—Yes, I trust to you!”
And in its fancied arms herself she threw!

A deadly wave encircled that fair form,
That merited embraces—far more warm.

Ah! dreadful deed! yet, at the awful time,
Unconscious what she did,—it is no crime;
For surely we, nor vice, nor guile can find,
In actions where there's no consent of mind;
The question when, “if just, was Suicide?”
'Twas grief that ask'd—'twas frenzy that replied.

ARGUMENT III.

The act of Suicide not an ebullition of sense,—since thereby a man quits a state of certainty for one of uncertainty. For a momentary ease risks an eternal hope;—presumes in the presence of his Maker, unasked and unprepared, whose will and pleasure he also attempts thereby to forestall.—The act not only devoid of sense, and unreasonable in itself, but unsupported by those who have the greatest pretensions to genius and to learning. Men blest with those invaluable gifts, though allied to misery and misfortune in the extreme, seem, by their patient endurance of these sufferings, not to have thought the act of Suicide a just and wise relief from their sorrows. With genius inspired, with sense endowed, and enlightened by reason, whatever was worthy of them they would have seen and cherished;—their abhorrence of Suicide, and its criminality, is justly to be inferred by the silence and disregard wherewith they treat it.

THE ACT OF SUICIDE DEVOID OF SENSE.

AN act to virtue thus without pretence,
Is too estrang'd to reason and to sense;
For, tell me where the boasted sense can be,
In madly trusting to uncertainty!
For, who can tell with true prophetic breath,
“What dreams may come” in that long “sleep of
death.”
What ills may in the next life be discern'd,
Who e'er to tell us from that bourne return'd?
Can it be wise, to quit by Suicide,
A sphere we know so well, for one untried?
Can it be wise to trust an unknown shore,
Whose realms no mortal eye did e'er explore?
We know what evils here we're doom'd to bear,
But in the future state, what pains are there?
We know what duties are appointed here,
But what are those in yon immortal sphere?
Th' extent of trouble in this world we know,
But who can tell our pains when hence we go?
When violence too great the frame has torn,
The malady then ceases to be borne.
Cold lethargy dispels all feeling thence,
And death-like torpor blunts the keenest sense.
The minds worse pains,—despair and fell remorse,
Madness invades, and deadens all their force.
How far the tendons, stretch'd with mortal woe,
Can bear the pang inflicted, thus, we know;
But say—what th' anguish of that nerve may be,
Brac'd by the hand of immortality?
We know what pains a wounded mind may bear,
Whilst reason sheds the light of mem'ry there;—
But who the feelings of a mind can say,
Illumin'd by the blaze of endless day?

'Tis wiser sure to bear our present woes,
 Than fly to others whose extent none knows.
 A broken limb a man may amputate,
 To save his body from a dying state;
 Another thing, tho' it must surely be,
 To cut off life, to fly from misery.
 For there is the soul, whose hopes are yet unsure,
 Whilst of the body, certain is the cure.
 He, who gave life, will'd also pain to thee;
 Think you by Suicide, forestall'd he'll be!
 The blow of self-destruction you would give;
 But you're deceiv'd,—you cannot cease to live!
 The blow would end your pains, you too believ'd;
 May you not also be in that deceiv'd?
 In this uncertain too, O tell me thence
 Where in the act is seen your boasted sense?
 Besides, whatever may therein await,
 The gain's so small, the chance so very great!
 Who for a trifle thus would risk the whole,
 And for the body's comfort risk the soul?
 What man of sense but would his lot endure,
 Sooner than risk a hope so great, so sure?
 Sooner than in an act so vast engage,
 Which can such trifling misery assuage;
 Which risks a future life of endless bliss.
 For merely momentary ease in this!
 Thus like the swearer,—when oft heard to say,
 "I will be  if you that doit don't pay;
 For mere performance of an act so small,
 Thus in a bond engaging soul and all!

But some make certain of the future state;
 And granting true all they thereof relate,
 Still, where's the sense or decency declar'd
 In going there unsummon'd, unprepar'd?
 Sure none but madmen thus would seek their God,
 And rush where seraphs fearfully have trod.
 Say, where's the sense, thus with uncleansed feet,
 T'obtrude a soul, whose life is incomplete.

Oh! who will say that Suicide's defin'd
 Th' ebullition of a well-taught mind?

Or that the act has e'en the least pretence,
To Reason's sanction, or th' assent of sense ;
Men, blest with these, trod not its path it seems,
Tho' they felt sorrow in its worst extremes.
Indeed so much, thence must the proverb be,
That genius is allied to misery.
Searching tho' science,—keen tho' learning's eye,
In Suicide no sense could they descry ;
And wisdom groaning 'neath the woes of life,
Saw no incitement to self-murder's knife.
Vers'd in the page of life, of nature too,
Therein no sanction for the deed they view.

Lo ! great Copernicus, a dungeon's gloom,
Seems to prefer too to a self-sought tomb ;
Had there been justice in self-murder's case,
He would have seen it, who the heav'ns could trace ;
For man, no more than planets, he saw mete,
To change his course before his orb's complete.

E'er hard thy fate, ye children of the muse,
But none for ease unlawful methods use !
Altho' in thought, by fancy's frenzy whirl'd,
Far beyond nature and this troublous world ;
Yet none 'yond nature would in action go
To seek relief, tho' heavy was their woe.
They scann'd her secrets and her laws could tell,
But only read them right, t'observe them well.

Thus, in the acts of Suicide we find,
Nor wisdom's sanction, nor th' assent of mind :
Genius, by inf'rences the most sublime,
Brands the base action with the name of crime.

O ! who could think bright sense approves a deed,
That from the hottest passions must proceed.
Passions, in whose furious vortex toss'd,
Ties both divine and human are all lost ;
For ah ! the act proceed it ever must,
From pride or anger, envy or disgust :
Oh ! when you ask, if just that way to die,
Think not 'tis heav'n-taught sense that makes re-
ply ;

For this, with truth's choice axioms is among,
When passion questions, reason holds her tongue.

ARGUMENT IV.

Suicide neither an act of heroism or courage, rather an evidence of cowardice and meanness. Except when in Rome's less virtuous days, when Suicide was common, not from the impulse of valour or virtue, but from slavish custom, and mere fashion of the times; in history it appears the truly brave, however unfortunate, never sought refuge from shame or disappointment in self-destruction. The example and opinions of valiant men deduced to prove the act to be cowardly, and unworthy of the brave;—particularly that of Columbus, Turenne, Buonaparte,—and the conduct of that brave and generous class of people, the Sailors, under the afflicting circumstances of ship-wreck.

The blow of self-destruction, though painful, venturous, and daring, no evidence of a truly brave mind, as the Suicide endures thereby only a smaller pain to shun a greater. There can be no bravery in daring the grave, which is natural to all men; in rashly venturing in a sphere unknown or contumaciously rushing into the presence of God. The Suicide neither thinks well nor dies bravely.

ANTI-SUICIDE.
Subdue your vices, man! life's only loss,
Then in the arms of death seek rest repose.
The task is great, but not ungodly too,
For virtue's gift is great, and will the worst subdue.

**SUICIDE NOT AN ACT OF COURAGE,
BUT COWARDICE.**

—————

SOME for the deed at least a merit crave,
Because it is heroic, great, and brave!
Ah!—brave is that, to meanly quit the post,
Because to danger 'tis expos'd the most?
Nay, in the danger there the honour lies,
The soul of valour in a hero's eyes.

Vainly the Suicide is called brave:—
In the field valour fights,—not in the grave;
'Tis *here* our virtue's put unto its test;
He conquers well who nobly does his best.

Yes, in the warfare of adversity,
Fortitude the standard is of brav'ry.

This life's our post, which we should never leave,
Until divine permission we receive:
Basely the Suicide that post deserts,
And his own arms to wicked use perverts:
Vile coward he! who, when to meet the foe,
Forward, as bid, so manfully should go,
Lur'd by some mean some false inglorious mark,
Sneak'd a near way—and stumbled in the dark.

Valour in the trenches yields his latest breath,
Suicide sneaks some covert way to death;
From life's fair standard cowardly he flies,
Acts judge and executioner,—and dies:
Thus, what he call'd his glory, in intent,
Becomes an ignominious punishment.

The brave disarms not for inglorious ease,
'Till all his enemies he conquer'd sees.

Subdue your vices, man ! life's only foes,
 Then in the arms of death seek soft repose.
 The task is great, but not unequal too,
 For virtue's giv'n, and will the worst subdue ;
 Virtue can stand its ground as long as life,
 An armour fitted to the glorious strife.

Shadow of man ! the suicide I call,
 Tho' some exclaim " see there, a hero fall !"
 Thus when a meteor shoots thro' air afar,
 " See !" say the vulgar, " lo ! a falling star !"
 A star, as soon shall from its orbit dart,
 As virtue from her sphere of action start !

Save when in Rome's worst days, by Suicide
 Men not from impulse but from custom died ;
 From the mere fashion of that vicious time,
 And not from motives virtuous or sublime ;
 In history we learn—the truly brave
 Never sought any but proud honour's grave ;
 Bleeding with wounds,—with poignant torture rent,
 Tho' ling'ring deaths approach, he waits th' event.
 Tho' mortal weapons crowd his dying bed,
 From their relief he turns aside his head.
 Death-wounds, like praises, as by all allow'd,
 Confer no glory when they're self-bestow'd ;
 But lo ! most pure unsullied honours flow,
 From both, when fairly giv'n by a —— foe.

Tho' disappointment oft is valour's doom,
 His griefs he hides not in self-murder's tomb :—
 Columbus, who sought many an unknown shore,
 Disdain'd the depths of Suicide t'explore ;
 Tho' envy gave him scandal for renown,
 A prison for a world,—chains for a crown !

The great Turenne, who valour's standard bore,
 Thought time ill-spent, life's losses to deplore ;—
 'Twere better far, employ'd (than in despair,)
 In vig'rous acts those losses to repair.

(5) E'en he, who hath such mighty battles won,
 And steer'd thro' death and danger to a throne ;
 Whose sword of late the pride of kings hath broke,
 And bent whole nations to his foreign yoke—

He, Buonaparte, this his opinion gave,
That he's a coward who seeks his own grave.
He, when a gens-d'armes did that sword employ
To kill himself, which should the foe destroy.
With his own hand e'en on the grand parade,
A scroll, thus written, gallantly display'd:
"Soldiers! this life's our post,—a post which we
E'en must defend with all our bravery.
He is a coward, who his station leaves,
Before immediate orders he receives."

When, as from Carthage Regulus return'd,
The torments they prepar'd for him he learn'd;
The cruel arts against him they employ'd
By self-destruction, he disdain'd t' avoid.
Nor did Posthumus think that base resource,
Valiant or just, when, with inhuman force,
He was compell'd by fortune's cruel stroke,
At Caudium, to pass beneath the yoke.
Nor Varro did by suicide retreat,
But patiently surviv'd his dire defeat.

No page historic ever mark'd him brave,
Who shunn'd encounter by a self-sought grave:
Where, in the record of life's virtuous day,
Does valour meet his death that wretched way?

The shipwreck'd mariner still keeps his boat,
Long as its crazy timbers are afloat;
Possess'd of neither compass or of chart,
Or morsel even sustenance t' impart;
Tho' little hope the dreary prospect gives,
Still life to save by painful means he strives,
Views instant ease in the surrounding grave,
But spurns it, as unworthy of the brave.

The brave see death too often near at hand,
Its pow'rful aid they easily can command;
But with too great indiff'rence view that foe,
Ever in search of it one step to go.

Ah, yes! the brave with patriot ardour hide
Those griefs that cowards veil by suicide;
Nor vainly those fair lives so meanly sell,
They to their country can devote so well.

Yes; they consider life's last drop of blood
 Devoted solely to their country's good;
 Nor can misfortune, sorrow, pain, or shame,
 Persuade them to deny this sacred claim.

In what thinks Suicide that he is brave?
 Is it in merely rushing to his grave?
 That's but the lot that all the dead have shar'd,
 And what for him by nature is prepar'd.
 Is he call'd brave, in piercing thro' the gloom,
 Since dark the path that leads unto his home!
 No danger strews that path, besides we go,
 To meet a friend, and not to meet a foe.
 Thinks he 'tis brave the realms eterne t'explore,
 And sighless venture on an unknown shore.
 Mere rashness sure! that deed is brave alone,
 E'en as the danger great or less is known:
 Nor safe the way, or dang'rous does he know,
 If dang'rous known, say would he thither go?

Thinks he 'tis brave, because he, unappall'd,
 Darts in God's presence, unsummoned, uncall'd?
 If courage that, 'tis such as madmen have,
 Or such as drunkenness might lend a slave.
 Say, would he call it brave, the guards to dare,
 And where enthron'd the king, rush madly there?
 An act thus void of decency and sense,
 Would sure be styl'd nought else but impudence.

True; if by poison, water, or the knife,
 The Suicide so rashly quits this life,
 Painful most certainly must be the blow;—
 He's not more brave for that, who meets it tho',
 What! do they say the resolution's great,
 Of him who meets so desperate a fate?
 What! make a boast of that?—Vain silly elf!
 In having fire enough to kill himself!
 The meanest atom does as much possess,
 A trifling pebble cannot boast much less.
 Let action but yon lifeless log illumine,
 There's fire enough within, that will that log con-
 sume.

Yes, self-destruction is a painful blow,
But how thereby can man a merit shew!
If bearing pain true courage can display,
Why does self-murder from it run away?
For he who ease, by suicide obtains,
By a slight anguish, flies from greater pains.
Short is self-murder's path,—thus men there go;
Were its pangsling'ring, would they strike the blow?
He knows his brav'ry can't last a campaign,
And thus he shews it by a coup-de-main.
Can that be courage,—patience thus without?
The act itself admits thereof a doubt.

Cool and delib'rate as he strikes the blow,
It tends no more true bravery to shew,
Than Robeck proves the right to suicide,
Since he a book wrote on it, and then—died!
Nor because Cato coolly (twice before
He kill'd himself) read Plato's Phædo o'er,
Does it prove Plato's works could justify,
The right of man by his own hand to die?

The motive gilds the sword that courage draws;
There is no courage in a wicked cause.
In acts where there no honesty can be,
Coolness is mere insensibility;
Deliberation then is merely doubt,
Which virtuous motives e'er should be without.

This grand conclusion then must be implied;
Nor sense, nor valour, marks the suicide;
Who doubts there's hope, and from life's station
flies,
He neither “greatly thinks, or bravely dies;”
The meanest cowardice that heart betrays,
That is the slave to censure or to praise.

ARGUMENT V.

THE act of suicide rather an evidence of selfishness than sensibility of heart.—It proceeds from an extreme and tender regard to our own feelings, but with a total indifference either to the woes or happiness of others, which renders the action injurious and criminal, as we are not born for ourselves alone, but united by solemn and special obligations to society.—The circumstances attending an act of suicide described.—The exposure of the corpse,—the indecent and unfeeling conduct of the coroner's inquest,—the agonized feelings of the surviving relative.—These, and the many shocking effects incidental to self-murder, certainly infer a total want of tenderness in the act, and are a proof of the extreme selfishness and insensibility of the person who commits the crime.

SUICIDE NOT AN ACT OF SENSIBILITY,
BUT SELFISHNESS.

SOME their defence of suicide impart,
Because it springs from tenderness of heart.

Yes, tenderness is virtue, when sincere ;
But how, in suicide, can such appear ?
Can that, as sensibility, be known,
Which studies comfort for itself alone ?
What, die—the wounds of life to heal,
Nor once consider what your friends must feel,
When they lament the woes your bosom rend,
But mostly, when they mourn your desp'rate end!—
When they lament a friend or brother lost,
When they lament such love and beauty crost!
What die—the cares of life to close,
Nor care how thence you break your friend's re-
pose!

Break his repose ;—alas ! perhaps for ever,
His peace of mind eternally too sever ;—
Place in the intellect, which only thought for you,
Dull ceaseless melancholy ;—perchance madness
too!—

Ah ! how know you what hopes he plac'd in thee,
How much his only joy your love could be ?
What comfort he selected when you smil'd,
How oft his tedious moments you beguil'd ?
What die—and ope the door, to peace that tends,
And basely shut it then against your friends.
Thus in those hearts, which lov'd you 'yond all
praise,

Fix a deep wound that mars their latest days !
What, die?—so pleas'd your own delight t' ensure,
Deaf to the woes that others must endure.

What, brave an act—which can such ills impart,
 And boast it springs from tenderness of heart!
 Where can those boasted, those fine feelings be!
 That exquisite, soft, sensibility!
 The sufferings view, that suicide must cause,
 And say, where tenderness of heart then was.
 Ah, no! an act so selfish sure must be
 Th' offspring of dark insensibility?

Only attend the progress of a corse,
 That in self-murder plac'd its last resource—
 From its first finding, weltering in gore,
 To its interment where 'tis seen no more.
 When first discover'd, lifeless, ghastly, pale,
 When first the relative o'erhears the tale;
 What tongue his sad emotions e'er exprest,
 The agonizing struggle in his breast?
 True, that cold form from sorrow now is free,
 But, ah! the gazing parent, what feels he!
 His child for ever gone! in such a way!
 Himself not near, one cheering word to say.
 The corpse disfigur'd, and at first unknown,
 Plac'd in the charnel-house for friends to own;
 Indecently expos'd to ev'ry eye,
 And in that state untouch'd, uncleans'd, must lie,
 Until in form the senseless inquest meet,
 To view the corpse, and then,—to sneer and eat;
 Canvassing th' event, at cold insensate ease,
 Whilst the more anxious beadle claims the fees:
 From him, sad relative, who weeps aloud,
 Nor comfort finds he in the gaping crowd.
 His deep regret what language e'er relates
 Whilst their cold verdict he anticipates?
 Now fears they *christian* burial will not give,
 To one who was so lovely when alive!—
 Now hears their sneers, their keen but ill-tim'd
 blame,
 Wounding his feelings, and perhaps his fame:
 For some, no doubt, the cruel inf'rence draws,
 Parental rigour of the act's the cause.
 At length, o'ercome by mental agony,
 He, in his child, forgets his misery.

ANTI-SUICIDE.

Unmindful of their sneers, their low abuse,
His child thus lost, he now has nought to lose.
Now dimm'd with frenzied gloom, his mental eye
Follows the corpse where lo! 'tis doom'd to lie.
Alarm'd at length, he cries, and stares around:—
“What, not interr'd in consecrated ground?
“A grave bestrew'd with flow'rs must be got:—
“What! place these limbs in this unhallow'd spot;
“In this cross-road, where oft the gibbet stands!
“Ah! cruelmen!—stand by, hold off those hands!—
“Ah! thro' that corse,—Oh! of such form and make!
“See, see! they drive the foul and blighted stake!”
At length, in frenzy lost, he raves aloud;
Then, fainting, sinks among th' astonish'd crowd.
Ye advocates of suicide, this action scan!
Virtuous tenderness then call it if ye can.
O let the man, who states the deed to be
The offspring pure of sensibility;
With eye attentive, let him view the scene,
Then say, what else than selfish does it mean.
Tell me, if other than ignoble 'tis,
Thus, dead to other's pains, alive to selfish bliss;
To live for self alone, is mean, they cry;
Tis also mean for self alone to die.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

BOOK THE THIRD

IS divided into six Sections. The first of which tends to prove, the hopes of an immortal state, instead of being an incentive to suicide, should rather serve to avert it. The second asserts the weakness of human nature is no apology for the act. The third proves human independence affords man no privilege for the crime, and that the power of death belongs to God alone.—The affected contempt of life is by the fourth proved to be no excuse for the act. The fifth declares, life under affliction is not an evil; of course, a man may not commit suicide under pretence of shunning evil. It also declares pain and adversity, being designed by heaven, must be endured patiently, and not shunned by unlawful means. The sixth and last section proves the act criminal, as it proceeds from human will and mind,—and not from blind causes, or the general laws of nature.

ARGUMENT I.

THE certainty of a future and immortal state affords no incentive to suicide; that which we know concerning that state should rather encourage us to bear our lot in this our natural life than stimulate us to quit it.—The consciousness of immortality is therefore a strong evidence against Suicide, and should rather avert the crime; since, under so pleasing and consolatory an idea, man is the better enabled to endure the woes of this life;—for which wise purpose, and to prevent the deed, the prospect of an eternal life of bliss seems expressly held up to the human eye.—By the blow of self-destruction, does not man forfeit, for present ease, this hope of future bliss.—He, that has lived the longest and most virtuous life, still leaves, when he dies, some duty incomplete, and is at best imperfect for such a place as heaven; how much less fit can he be to meet his God, who rashly cuts short his defective existence.—His impatience not only deprives him of present relief, but certainly cuts off the hope of that future reward of eternal bliss, which he who bears with resignation his untoward life so richly deserves.

THE HOPES OF A FUTURE AND IMMORTAL STATE NO INCITEMENT TO THE ACT. (6.)

TH' uncertainty that doth the soul await,
In its immortal and its future state,
Is one among the arguments beside,
That vig'rously protest 'gainst suicide.
E'en were we certain too of all we've read,
Or all that on futurity's been said,
Still stronger reasons from those hopes sublime,
Might be deduc'd against self-murder's crime.

By this idea of immortality,
Man, not deterr'd alone, but should invited be,
To change the desp'rate purpose of his mind,
And rather to his lot be more resign'd.
Yes, sure the hopes of an immortal state
Should tempt mankind to patient bear his fate;
For what can twenty years of mis'ry be,
In competition with eternity?
Ah! this reflection should have Cato taught,
A better consolation than he sought.
Well of a future state was he aware,
And that the souls of men immortal are;
For twice, the night he kill'd himself, he read—
What Plato, in his Phædo thereon said.
In the idea of immortality,
Could he temptation to self-murder see?
Rather, indeed, "that pleasing dreadful thought,"
Should the great Roman how to live have taught;
For man's chief comfort in this troublous world,
Is in the hope, futurity unfurl'd.
The fond idea of a future state,
Nature's slow course enables man to wait,

The thoughts of immortality content,
 And well support him under each event :
 Excite the soul to strive in virtuous deeds,
 And cheer it as in death's chill arms it bleeds.

Ah ! pleasing thought ! ah yes, my soul ! for this,
 Behold the promises of future bliss !

That age its dire decrepitude might bear
 Each racking pain to which poor flesh is heir ;
 Behold he knows a state he must assume,
 That in eternal joyous youth shall bloom.

That man, deform'd by pain, or blurr'd by grief,
 May comfort find, behold this sure belief !

Dost of this mortal and mis-shapen mass,
 A faultless angel form beneath he has,
 Which in perennial beauty too shall bloom,
 When death and dire deformity shall fill one tomb.

That youth may bear the shock of human woes,
 Hence, he a part immortal has, he knows,
 A soul, a spirit,—never-dying flame !
 That, palsied be, or quite destroy'd life's frame,
 Form'd by a potent and unerring hand,
 Safe midst the shock of ages it shall stand ;
 Shall flourish when all nature must decay,
 And live when suns expire, and mountains fade
 away.

Hope of future bliss ! fond idea of heav'n !
 That man his lot might bear expressly giv'n.
 For this, and to avert base suicide,
 Th' idea of immortality's implied.
 For this, by inward feeling too we learn,
 This state must soon give way to one eterne.
 For this, a sphere is promis'd 'yond the sky,
 To teach man how to live, not bid him die.
 What stronger proof by wisdom can be giv'n,
 That suicide is not approv'd by heav'n !

O ! why this hope, encouragement to live !
 If man his death-blow premature may give !
 Why teach him endless years of bliss to view,
 But that with patience he may bear the few ?

Yes; 'tis that hope which should induce the mind,
Beneath her sufferings to be more resign'd :
Knowing how short life's worst duration is,
And there must follow an eternal bliss.

Oh! when by self-destruction we seek ease,
And thus our hearts from misery release,
Incur we not all we must apprehend,
That on a long hereafter may attend?
Man strikes and gains relief from present woe,
But future bliss sure forfeits by the blow.
Ah there, say some, we to our God confide,
Thus make religion truck with suicide.
What! trust to God, and on that Being call,
Whose pleasure by the act they would forestall!
Unask'd, rush in his presence, unprepar'd,
What the most virtuous soul would scarce have
dar'd!

For such a place the most refin'd, unfit,
How less is he, whose life is incomplete!
For live those years the longest life has run,
Still there is left some duty yet undone.
Of that, how little can the man fulfil,
Who rashly clips life's short span shorter still.
To him can countenance divine be giv'n,
Who runs, unfair, the circle mark'd by heav'n;
Of guilt committed, as he must appear,
Nor yet by life's ordeal render'd clear,
A rich reversion can he hope above,
Who thus in virtue's cause so slightly strove?
Oh, no! 'tis base contumacy direct,
Nor has his vain impatience more effect,
Than to deprive him of that sweet relief,
His present state admits, tho' mark'd by grief,
And cuts off the fair hope of that reward,
Which bounteous heav'n will to those afford,
Who their condition, howe'er past all cure,
Wisely resign'd, yet patiently endure.
For what more fair to eyes divine can be,
Than virtue struggling with adversity!

ARGUMENT II.

HUMAN weakness no excuse for self-murder.—

The tender form and slight make of the human structure no evidence that by nature man was designed for the deed.—Though man is born naked and defenceless, he is still better armed than any animal in creation, having mental endowments, a heart stored with fortitude, a soul armed with virtue, and a kind providence to protect him.—Man should not find fault with Nature in giving him the form he has, who, had he moulded it himself, is so unlikely to have made that better, which he hourly disfigures with shame.—It should be enough to prove the criminality of suicide, to know that nature revolts at the deed; but it so happens, Nature, under the weight of affliction, is somewhat deprived of her usual admonitory emotions; so that when a suicide consults her upon the lawfulness of the deed, he fancies the corporeal torpor is an evidence of Nature's tacit consent to the act, not aware that it is Pride puts the question, and Folly makes the reply.

HUMAN WEAKNESS NO APOLOGY FOR THE ACT.

MORE modest some, by putting in no claim
To virtue, courage, honour, or to fame;
Nor do they say the act shews strength of mind,
But is to imbecility inclin'd.
Their cause on Nature's weakness thus they throw,
Unable to resist life's partial woe.
On this they strive to prove the right to die,
And what they cannot conquer, best to fly.

If so, as justified the robber too,
Nor merits punishment the more than you;
For he, too weak, temptation to refuse,
May also plead his weakness an excuse.

'Tis human weakness that to brothels lures
Sages and priests,—heroes and epicures.

Yes, some on Nature throw the further blame,
For giving man so weak and slight a frame,
And fancy, from his slender form and make,
He was design'd at will his life to take.

Life's exit is so quick, so easy too,
So hard to keep it, and the means so few.
Hence life, they say, design'd was to be free,
That, ne'er was meant a prisoner to be,
Whose prison-bars are made so very weak,
At will it surely its escape may seek.

Weak, call they that, because without 'tis nude,
Nor own the guard within, brave Fortitude!
The watchman, Prudence, and that guide Good
Sense;

But, above all, that true friend Providence!

That, man, in corp'ral form, is weak 'tis true,
Nude in the world he came, so goes out too.
The birds with feathers cloth'd, the brute with hair,
Fish arm'd with scales, with down flies cover'd are;

But man's born naked to affliction's rod,
To shew his nobler far dependence—God!
A God too wise to let it be suppos'd,
That man (his noblest work) he'd leave expos'd.
Some he with virtue arms,—some clothes with
mind,—

To some gives beauty, others sense refin'd.
In vain they strive to draw from man's weak
side,

An inference, that sanctions suicide.
To pull that house down, wisdom can they call,
Because at one time likely 'tis to fall?
The mansion rear'd with so much pain and care,
In one short moment give up to despair;
Life's wond'rous fabric crush, for pride or shame,
Then throw on Nature's weakness the foul blame!
Such as find fault with nature, silly elves!

To shew their wisdom, let them make themselves.
If aught tends human weakness to expose,
'Tis what their own inventions oft disclose.
Will they pretend to mould the human frame,
Which hourly they disfigure with new shame?
Its loveliness with passions oft distort,
And blast the outward form with inward thought!

The varied tints the human face displays,
Owe not their hues alone to Sol's fierce rays;
Man gives himself one tint,—the blush of shame,
And likes the portrait, if but rich the frame.
Yes, Sol gives man the black, the brown, and yel-
low,

Passion the pallid hue, remorse the sallow.

Those who to nature's weakness thus attend,
To nature's other voice an ear should lend.
No further proof against the crime they need,
Than just to see she shudders at the deed.
But man there is, who can in woe's drear time,
Without emotion meditate the crime.
He, whilst all others shrink at its mere name,
Meets it without compunction, dread, or shame.

Grief has so deaden'd ev'ry nervous sense,
Nature's consent he fondly dreams from thence,
Thus, when to know, if just the deed, he seeks,
In nature's silence fancies instinct speaks;
But like the wretch that Shakespeare represents,
"His poverty and not his will consents,"
For, lo! when "just is suicide?" he cries,
'Tis Anguish asks—'tis Folly that replies.

By grief persuaded, and in mind distress'd,
He thinks he's right, hence fancies all the rest;
He thinks the world, the horrid deed, will view,
In the same specious light he sees it too.
Thus he, whose head, a swimming may confound,
Thinks every thing around him too turns round.

With nature man finds fault, mistaken elf!
If there is aught to blame 'tis in himself.

ARGUMENT III.

Man's vainly-boasted independence, affords him neither an excuse or an incentive to commit the crime of Self-Murder. Man cannot call life his own, and on that account, assert his right to dispose of it as he pleases;—the folly of calling that his own, whose frailties and uncertainty are so convincing a proof to the contrary.—Life belongs to God, and happily so, since from his guidance and protection only does it receive the dignity it possesses. Man has no right to dispose of it at pleasure, even was it his own; as we have no right to intrude ourselves upon our neighbour's property, so have we no right to surmount the barrier of nature, (death,) and obtrude ourselves on the province of God, (eternity). The power and dispensation of death, the exclusive right and prerogative of God, which man by Suicide usurps:—a further proof is thence consequently inferred of the criminality of the deed. The mysterious manner in which heaven dispenses death around, vindicated from the censure of man:—a proof of his exclusive right to that dispensation argued from thence. The comfort we should derive from knowing the disposal of death is in such unerring hands.

HUMAN INDEPENDENCE NO PRIVI-
LEGE FOR THE ACT. THE POWER
OF DEATH BELONGS TO GOD ALONE.

TO argue, then, is there yet such a man,
That Suicide was nature's destin'd plan?
And weight to give to this most vain pretext,
Place in the scale his independence next:
Yes,—there is one who e'en presumes to scan,
How independent of his God is man;
Thus far, says he, God means to be my guide,
But life is mine, to keep or take beside.
When I my form receiv'd, 'twas given me,
Thus of myself a part must surely be:
What is myself must be of course my own:
My right to use it as I please is known.
On this pretence, this vain pretence, men try
To prove their right just when they please to die.
Nay, life is not man's own, and if it was,
To use it as he likes there's no just cause:
What! right to self-disposal make pretence!
Your neighbour's grounds, would you dare enter
thence?
Ah! no,—you dread what human laws may do;
And fear you not what laws divine do too?
From due respect, your neighbour's lands untrod,
Yet would you boldly tread th' estate of God?
Yes,—fearless in eternity you'll rush,
And brave God's presence e'en without a blush;
The barrier (death) 'twixt you and the Sublime,
To rashly pass, you think can be no crime.
You thus respect your neighbour's earthly right,
Yet set at nought the pow'r of heav'n quite!
Mere madness, that, and this as foolish too,
To think life your's to act as pleases you.

Is't possible, that life your own you call?
That, which the most uncertain is of all!
Yet think 'tis yours, at your free will t'enjoy,
Your own to keep, to cherish, or destroy.
Life, that mere fleeting, short, and fretful, thing,
Alike unsure to peasant, sage, or king:
Life,—that the slightest cause will often mar,
Spite of all caution, art, design, or care.
Life,—that a fly can cancel or annoy,
That e'en a hair can torture or destroy!
That, thinks he his, to do as he may please,
So much expos'd to trouble and disease!
Who, in defiance of his schemes t'enjoy it,
At will can torment, or at will destroy it.
That life, whose fairest state he cannot measure,
Nor e'en insure it one short moment's pleasure;
Devoted seldom to its proper use,
Yet thinks it his to act as he may choose:
Oh no!—its fragile and uncertain state,
Proves 'tis not his, but must belong to fate.
And precious only in the eye of sense,
Because 'tis in the hands of Providence.
At man's disposal, life would merely seem
An empty gift, a shadow or a dream;
But plac'd in hands, omnipotent, divine,
Thro' all its frailties glory seems to shine:
E'en its uncertainty seems solid bliss,
From knowing in whose mighty hands it is.
O'er life no more, let man usurp the rod,
Whose only dignity's dependence upon God!
Nor of his independence boast should he,
Which nature proves so clearly cannot be;—
But rather of her works, or great or small,
Proves man is more dependent than them all.
With faultless instinct blest, well cloth'd each form,
From the rhinoc'ros to the scaled worm:
But man's born naked to affliction's rod,
To shew his better far dependence—God!
And with each sense such slight perception's giv'n,
That he might not prefer his strength to heav'n:

So vain and few his earthly comforts prove,
That he might look alone for bliss above.

Nor life alone at heav'n's disposal is,
The power alone of death, is also his !
Then say,—may man usurp the means of death,
And snatch from God, the pow'r o'er his breath ?
For surely he, who dies by hands his own,
Usurps what is the right of God alone !

Yes, in his hands an equal pow'r appears
To shorten life, or lengthen its frail years.
Th' incomprehensive way in which he deals,
Death's darts around his right o'er them reveals :
To prove their pow'rs to God alone belong,
Hence live the weakly, hence too die the strong ;
Hence blooming youth, in death's embraces sleep,
While age on crutches yet is left to creep.

In Lisbon thousands by an earthquake fall,
Whilst filthy Caffres feel no shock at all !
Safe o'er Kamtschatka's huts the snows dissolve,
Whilst Ætna's flames the vintagers involve !
O'er savage Afric' peace still drives her car,
Whilst polish'd Europe bleeds with ceaseless war.
Thus too a Lambert in his own fat drowns,
Whilst lives the wretch, scarce more than skin and
bones.

Nations and individuals feel alike
The blows of death, just as he's pleas'd to strike.
In life's distinctions heav'n no rule describes,
Hence lives a Whitelock whilst a Nelson dies ;
Nor sense or virtue turns his arm aside,
And this to prove, his will's alone his guide !
Shall man then dare to snatch from heav'n the dart,
And say, " Lo ! here, I'll plant it in my heart !"
Will he, too say, God's wisdom to deny,
" You kill'd a Porson, lo ! 'tis I should die !"
Thus vainly saith he too, " the reason give,
Why that must die, which we think best should
live ?"

Ask why the Jew feeds on the cleanly dove,
And leaves the swine in filthiness to rove.

Lo! here the sense of all the myst'ry lies;
God diff'rent objects views with diff'rent eyes:
Nor should vain man his partial actions blame,
Nor should he wonder, who hath done the same.
E'en man belov'd, by hated man expires,
And malice murders what true love admires:
Man kills that ox too, other men adore;
Though less than God, O say shall man do more!
Shall we, since vice must live and virtue die,
Question his sense therein, or pow'r deny?
Tho' this for mere distinction lives or dies,
He proves his pow'r o'er life, and that is wise:
'Tis wise;—and if we justly question this,
Man too may question ev'ry thing that is.
Shall man th' omniscience of his God deny,
Because with splendour he adorns a fly?
Shall he assert, its beauties lost must be,
Since he their tints without a glass can't see?
Or say such hues, that human thought surpass,
Might better have adorn'd the lowly ass?
Know, the same motive that adorns this fly,
Bids rank vice live, and lets fair virtue die.
If strange it seems and faulty to our eyes,
'Tis in ourselves the error only lies.
Did man possess his Maker's faultless sight,
What thus seems wrong would seem entirely right.
Had he an eye whose visual pow'r combines,
And to one centre points diverging lines;
Had he an eye that thro' all space could roll,
And in one view could comprehend the whole,
Then would he see, in all things great or small,
That form this vast, this congregated ball,
Each in due order as they fall in place,
With equal splendour form'd and equal grace.
E'en from the sun, all gloriously bright,
To yon mean glow-worm's pale and borrow'd light:
E'en from the blue, ethereal, grand arcade,
To the pale bloom that decks the humblest glade.
God does not form from partial rules his plan,
Nor by mere human laws their beauties scan.

Heav'n life's varied objects does not view,
Thro' passion or thro' temper as men do;
Who thereby see the transient prospect pass,
With jaundic'd eyes or thro' a colour'd glass;
Thus frost and verdure, light and shade create,
As pride or temper may predominate.

Then let's not question where the wisdom lies,
When Neros' live and when a Howard dies?
Nor let us snatch from God the pow'r o'er breath,
Nor use a pow'r that's his alone,—fell death.
Since death belongs but to the Great Sublime,
Ah! who shall say, self-murder is no crime?
Who says that, death, which thus belongs to heav'n,
When self-bestow'd, is just or fairly giv'n?
Who dares assert what God alone may do,
He with impunity may do it too?

To God alone belongs death's awful use,
Our comfort this, he'll ne'er that pow'r abuse.
Wisdom supreme each effort must direct;
No rash experiment to try effect:
Not like the man who sulphur's force to try,
Explodes the gun and kills the standers-by.
In the most awful shew of his controul,
Still safe, the monarch's and the beggar's soul!

ARGUMENT IV.

It is a mistaken notion that the love of life arises from the fear of death.—Contempt of life, on account of its transient comforts, is merely affected, and is no apology for the commission of Suicide. The sublime contempt of life under certain independent circumstances is an evidence of sense and virtuous resignation, but is not to be displayed by a premature and self-sought death. Contempt of life only cherished by desperate minds. The wise and just, the great and brave, place no dependence on it, but derive their consolation from virtue.—To live, is the best way to shew the sublime contempt of life's frail and uncertain pleasures, proving thereby, when it has no solid comfort to give, how nobly (independent in mind) you can live without them.

CONTEMPT OF LIFE NO EXCUSE FOR THE ACT.

THE love of life, some restless casuist saith,
Arises chietly from the fear of death :

The fear of death ne'er once the man alarm'd,
Who dar'd immortal be, by virtue arm'd.

Some call the love of life a low desire,
Whose joys can only vulgar souls inspire :
Joys so imperfect, transient, and vain,
In seeking them they ne'er reward the pain.

Contempt of life, on great occasions shewn,
To ev'ry selfish feeling too unknown,
Displays exalted notion, heav'n-born sense,
Of vast conception too, is evidence.

So great our longing for immortal joys ;
Life's fleeting bliss no more the sense employs ;
Scarce worth e'en tasting even in its prime,
And here to stay is only losing time :

But hold—ere those affected truths they own,—
Are not the blandishments of life first gone ?
Beneath this railing, don't we see vexation ;
Is not the notion veil'd by ostentation ?
In life's ambiguous state, their glories gay,
Unable to advantage to display ;
They the steep hill of stoicism mount,
And cunningly turn death to their account.

The world, by Alexander occupied ;
Thus, in his tub, Diogenes took pride :
Thus, Cato gloried in a patriot's tomb,
Because great Cæsar had the pride of Rome.

Contempt of life too often is at best
A dang'rous inmate of the human breast ;
And cherish'd only by th' abandon'd few,
Who have no virtuous solid hope in view.
Contempt of life no comfort ever gave,
The just, the sensible, the great, or brave.

Say, is it that, which does away the shock,
 Or of the axe, the scaffold, or the block?
 Or what was it so potent too indeed,
 That made a Sydney with such calmness bleed?
 What, from the cheek of lovely Lady Grey,
 Chas'd the pale hues of woman's fears away?
 To Raleigh's mind, what could such pow'r reveal,
 That he with smiles the headsman's axe could feel?
 Oh! not contempt of life,—a madman's faith!
 But virtue, virtue, cheer'd their souls in death!
 'Twas that, an Addison, thus taught to cry,
 "How happy, see—a Christian can die."

But grant it right, to have with sense refin'd,
 Sublime contempt of worldly joys combin'd;—
 Yet in the face of argument they fly,
 Who think the way to prove it, is—to die;
 Vain proof indeed! deduc'd too from the tombs,
 Such as by instinct unto madmen comes!
 Rather to live, the method best to shew,
 Sublime contempt of vulgar joys below.
 Thus proving that when life has none to give,
 How nobly still without them you can live.
 By death, thus premature, the proof is lost,
 And marks a mind, by human weakness cross'd.
 Tho' vain life's joys,—it prov'd you lov'd them so,
 Without them, scarce a moment you could go.

Yes, live! that only argues best to prove,
 The mental greatness you so dearly love:
 Live;—and lo! under e'en the worst event,
 Shew you are happy since you are content.

The pains of life unable yet to cure
 Ease as you can, but patiently endure.
 There the best argument unanswer'd lies,
 Adopted only by the good and wise.
 Life's pleasures gone,—there's still a bliss behind,
 Peculiar only to the noble mind.

It may be well life's pleasures to despise;
 To live without them,—there the virtue lies.
 The best way to revenge is to forgive,
 So the best triumph over woe's to live.

ARGUMENT V.

Life, under affliction, not an evil; of course, there is no excuse for quitting it by Suicide, under pretence of shunning evil.—Affliction the design of heaven: a blessing, and not a curse—since it corrects our desires, and stimulates to virtuous energy.—Pain not the signal of retreat;—a warning to prepare against the invasion of vice—to correct our failings, and reform.—It never is meant as the signal of despair.—A change of mind the way to happiness, not a dissolution of body.—Pain, sorrow, and adversity, being the design of heaven, must therefore be patiently endured, and not shunned by wicked and unlawful means. That pain was intended—the plants stored with balm to heal, are evidence, and that it should be relieved by lawful and virtuous application, not shunned by evil actions, invention and ability is given to the human mind, to discover the healing virtues of those plants, and to apply them.--Hence also genius to invent and hope to encourage,—and that, man should patiently endure his few years of sorrow, the prospect of eternity is intimated.—The ways of providence are unsearchable, and, altho' not understood by man, the wisdom, justice, and efficiency thereof should not be doubted.

LIFE IN AFFLICTION IS NOT AN EVIL;

Therefore no excuse for quitting Life by Suicide, under
pretence of shunning Evil.

PAIN AND SORROW DESIGNED BY HEAVEN!

Must therefore be endured with patience, and not shunned
by wicked means.

MAN has a right, by nature, to pursue—
What seemeth good;—and what seems evil, too
He should avoid; and that in all respects,
So on others he no injury reflects:
Life to get rid of, from this, argue they;
For life itself an evil is they say.
What! Life an evil? when with woe transfix'd;
Where is the good with evil not inmix'd?
And thus since life is not exempt from pain,
A curse, they think it,—but think so in vain:
However drear the prospect to our eyes,
“Afflictions oft are blessings in disguise.”
How many instances we daily meet,
Where harsh adversity has prov'd life's sweet;
For 'tis adversity refines our minds,—
Reforms our morals, and our passions binds,
The baleful pow'r of dire excess abates,
To virtuous action also stimulates;
Whereas, prosperity oft proves our bane,
By making us deprav'd,—conceited,—vain;
Intemperance, and pride too it creates,
And thus both mind and body enervates.
E'en some there are of such illib'ral mind,
Prosperity but makes them worse inclin'd;

As if they thought, the more God makes their
store,

The closer they should bar the store-house door !

Thus, as their cup with comfort is more full,

They are more niggard, crabbed, and more dull ;

Bliss makes them worse than what they were
before,

As sun rays make e'en vinegar more sour.

O ! think not pain an evil, but conclude,

'Tis meant by nature for our only good ;

To check some rank excrescences of mind,

Or give the sense new tone,—joy more refin'd ;

E'en just, as by the amputating knife,

The surgeon creates pain to save the life :

So too, affliction puts the heart to pain,

By cutting off desires impure, and vain,

Which but corrupt and vitiate the nerves,

And thus both mind and body it preserves.

Oh ! think not life an evil, mix'd with pain !

Since thence new tone the senses oft obtain ;

Oft painful is the overflow of bile,

But with the pain it sweetens too the while ;

The bitter of the gall, 'tis understood,

That cleanses, sweetens, and refines, the blood ;

When daintier sweets but to ferment are known,

And to deprive the stomach of its tone ;

Tho' painful too, laborious rough employ,

It is the source of vigour and of joy ;

Whereas dull ease, breeds vain and fierce desire,

And fans a flame in which it must expire.

'Tis in ourselves the evil is combin'd,

And we must alter—if relief to find.

'Tis not by quitting life we quit our woes ;

A change of mind the diff'rence must disclose :

Strive not with pain your being to destroy—

But, to preserve it, noble means employ !

Assuage your pride, abate each wild desire,

“ And do not rashly set your house on fire,

Merely t'avoid the trouble, care, and pain,

Of setting it in order once again.”

Strive to relieve those pains you cannot cure,
And what you cannot conquer—well endure.

Instead of pain—a signal to retreat,
To stay—it is a warning, most complete;
It fully proves there is some vice to mend,
Some duty to begin, 'ere life may end.
Pain oft-times is a warning to prepare,
But never was the signal for despair!

Oh! that thro' earth this too was understood,
That partial woes are for the gen'ral good.
The same flash, thus, that strikes Amynta blind!
Kills the live venom of the south-west wind!
Thus, too, the show'rs, that birth-day suits may spoil,
With life and freshness saturate the soil;
E'en the dread thunder that alarms your soul,
Forewarns the few,—admonishes the whole!

Where blooms the lily, oft the nettle grows,
Thus, with our pleasures heav'n mingles woes!
Affliction thus, by God himself design'd,
Life is not evil when therewith combin'd.
What heav'n designs, this truth is clear for one,
We have no right by guilty means to shun.

That unto man both pain and woe was meant,
A fact as certain is, as true they're sent;
Or why to men such tender bodies give,
But their effects, the better to receive?
In plants again, this sacred truth we learn,
That pain was meant to rack, and fever burn;
Or why in herbs medicinal combine,
The healing balm, or soothing anodyne?

'Tis also true, that nature meant mankind,
Should bear his anguish, patient and resign'd;
“ Yet, whilst we're taught, to mildly bear our fate,
'Tis lawful, when we can, to ease our state;
Those arrows, that we cannot blunt so well,
At least, we may with trifling ease repel.
And tho' a cure, not radical we see,
At least, there may a palliative be.
And tho' we know not if misfortune's sent,
Or as a favour—or a punishment,

'Tis just, howe'er, to end it as we please,
So as with guilt, we do not purchase ease."

That woe was meant, then, cannot be denied,
But heav'n ne'er meant relief, in Suicide;
If meant, man should not bear his hard condition,
But make foul Suicide, his sole physician
Why with the lenitive, enrich the rose?
Why the narcotic in the poppy grows?
Why give to man that great inventive mind—
Their sev'ral virtues, chemic'ly to find?
Why give him skill their uses to apply,
If Suicide is pain's best remedy?
If pain's not meant, nor meant to be endur'd,
Why grow the means, by which those pains are
cur'd?

What better proof—that heav'n most surely meant,
Mankind should bear the sufferings He sent?
As he meant hunger,—thus provided food,
As he meant thirst, and thus made cool the flood—
So he meant grief, and sent religion down,
So he meant pain, and hence the balsam's grown.
Our frames He form'd so tender and so slight,
That man might glory in celestial might;
Of grief susceptible, He form'd each part:
Hence charity, and mercy, grace the heart!
The breast, He made respire with sorrow's sigh!
Hence patience came,—that heav'nly remedy!
Which tho' to ease, not corp'ral pain design'd,
It may, at least, preserve our peace of mind.

Oh! if th' Omniscient, and the Great Supreme,
To bear our woes, with patience did not deem,
But meant, by death to end them as we please—
And in the act of Suicide—find ease!
Say, why in plants such virtues do we find?
With skill to use them—why endow the mind?
Why, in the breast was emulation plac'd—
That spur to genius, and invention chaste?
Why too, was glory held to lure the eyes,
To feed the spirit of bold enterprize?

Which steer'd o'er floods unknown, by dauntless
art !

Seeks preservation! e'en in danger's heart?

Why was hope's anchor giv'n — the soul's best
treasure?

If life might slip her cable just at pleasure?

Sail without convoy, o'er death's unknown flood,

Without a cartel, from the hand of God!

Why promise man a future state of bliss?

But he may patient bear his lot in this!

Why an eternity of joy ensure?

But that he should life's few hours pains endure!

Why give to time, that sure and fleeting wing?

That to an end must all things shortly bring!

But that in grief, man, may not yield his breath;

But seek relief from time, and not in death!

Why were the ties of friendship and of love,

Around the heart, with such precaution wove?

If as the proud, or sullen humours take,

Those sacred bonds at pleasure, man might break!

O, say not you have liberty to die,

You might as well all providence deny!

As well might say, that you at any hour,

To change your nature, have an actual pow'r:—

That you've a right—God's motives to repel,

And 'gainst your being's author, to rebel.

The laws of Nature, and of God you break,

Who thus advantage of existence take!

Against your country's laws too you combine,

Thus, break the law, both human and divine!

If pain was meant, some ask the reason why?

And what they cannot argue, thus deny.

The hand that guides, unseen, God's ways unknown,

Thence shall proud man, his allwise pow'r disown;

And, like the victim of November's gloom,

Seek in despair—a mean, untimely tomb?

The one forgets the sun's congenial beam,

Is still as potent, tho' it hid may seem;

And will shine forth, a few short moments hence,

With equal splendour, and beneficence!

The other—when affliction dims the sense,
 Forgets there still exists a providence !
 Who, tho' unseen, in that immediate hour,
 Yet, as he's kind, he still is great in pow'r :
 Nor thinks that true, which choice experience
 saith,—

Time will relieve from woe, as well as death !
 More real splendour decks yon moth's small
 wings,

Than emanates from thrones of eastern kings ;
 Since men possess no microscopic eye,
 Those charms to see, shall they the fact deny ?
 Shall man thus doubt the pow'r th' Almighty hath,
 Because the optic's not enlarg'd by faith ?
 On men's eyes, thus, when rays of hope scarce fall,
 They think God wrong !—or there's no God at all !
 But man as well might doubt that time stands still,
 Because he sees not move its secret wheel :
 Lo ! still goes on the wheel of heav'n's pow'r,
 And will strike comfort—when it strikes the hour !

'Tis man that's dark (God's ways are ever bright)
 No want of providence,—but want of sight.
 Man ! thro' his passions looks, but when thro'
 these,—

Thro' an inverted telescope he sees,
 Which the wrong side of things displays alone,
 Or makes each object seem turn'd upside down.

The ways of heav'n are too sublime to scan,
 And too short-sighted is the eye of man ;
 Shall man, then, think the arm divine is weak,
 And in his own vain efforts comfort seek ?
 Oh ! may calm patience stay his desp'rate arm ;
 His fear-chill'd breast may resignation warm !
 Then, from despair and prejudice quite free,
 He doubts no more the pow'r he cannot see :

The ways of Providence, in darkness plac'd—
 Like light'ning—seen—but never can be trac'd.

ARGUMENT VI.

Notwithstanding the inanimate parts of the creation carry on their action, frequently without regard to the injury they do, it affords no reason for man to act without deference to social, natural, or divine interest.—Although it is asserted Providence governs the animal and material world by certain fixed and general laws, Suicide is no less criminal, since, under that notion it is falsely declared to be an act of nature, and from thence impiously concluded to be an act of God; for the Act of Suicide is not urged by those general laws, by which the universe is governed; it is the mere result of human will and mind, with which man is distinctly gifted by Providence, of whom, they are in a certain degree rendered independent, at least, not wholly subject to the general laws of nature. Hence, the impropriety of considering an act, which is the result of will and mind, as originating in blind causes. Nor because nothing is said to be done without permission of God, is self-murder less guilty,—the folly of regarding it so;—for, if all actions were innocent because permitted by Providence, none, however cruel or injurious, would be unjust, since they, in common with the rest, have his permission also.

SUICIDE DOES NOT PROCEED FROM
BLIND CAUSES ;—IT IS THE RESULT
OF HUMAN WILL AND MIND.

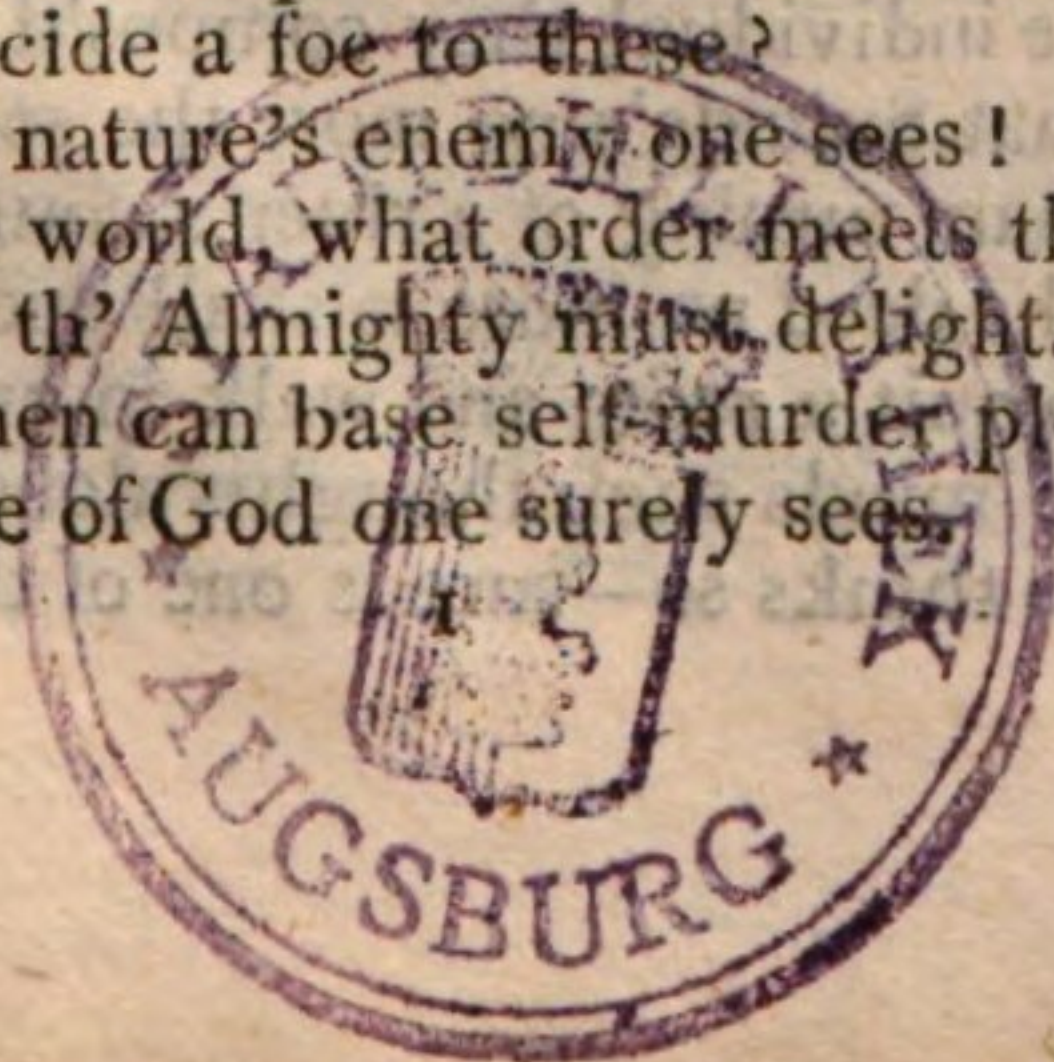
AH ! say, since nature, in volcanic ire,
Emits her lava in a stream of fire ;
Nor seeming heeds what state her rage annoys,
What plain, lays waste, what human hope, destroys ;
Heedless, relief in one place thus to find,
What evil to another is design'd ;—
Shall man from thence a vain pretence assume,
To seek relief in base self-murder's tomb ?
Thus heedless, from his various duties fly,
All laws divine, and social too defy :
And shall he boast, no injury he does ?
Oh say ! what good e'er from the deed arose.
His pains he ends—ah ! that, how can he know ?
Who from the grave e'er rose to tell him so ?
When nature errs 'tis plainly understood,
Her partial evils tend to gen'ral good.
When Ætna and Vesuvius disgorge,
The deathful instruments their entrails forge,
The streaming lava down their sides expands,
Nor wastes alone the toil of mortal hands ;
But man himself, his cattle and his home,
Consigns at once to death and ruin's tomb.
But then, to recompence those hearts that mourn,
See, thro' the air their smoking ashes borne.
No more their horrors now the heart appal,
With joy man hails them as in show'rs they fall :
See, with their richness they manure the soil,
To crown with blest abundance all his toil.
See too, yon river, its high banks o'erflow ;
A certain injury it does we know :

But, when retir'd, we added verdure find,
Springs from the genial slime it leaves behind.
Ah ! see, what ills from human acts ensue,
Whilst Nature, to her int'rest ever true,
In e'en, her worst and most convulsed state,
From partial harm can gen'ral good create.

The gen'ral laws of nature, too, to say,
Can never alter, weaken, or decay ;
May be disprov'd e'en from the state of man,
So far degen'rate from her primal plan:
Where's now his boasted and gigantic strength ?
Those years of life, where's now their wond'rous
length?

Where too the monstrous Mammoth can we trace ?
What does its office, what now fills its place ?
Its late discover'd bones, ah ! say, did they,
Perform that office as they buried lay ?

When man from anguish, misery, and grief,
Seeks to obtain by Suicide relief ;
To say the crime inverts not Nature's laws,
Nor injures, or obstructs her sacred cause ;
Is as absurd, as vainly to maintain,
They who seek temporary ease from pain,
By drinking spirits, do not injure nerve,
Or from health's genial rules unwisely swerve.
To act with nature, e'er to gen'rous use,
Apply her means, and not her means abuse :
They who those means thus wisely don't employ,
Avert her motives and her ends destroy.
The views of nature surely are design'd,
Both for the peace and comfort of mankind.
Say, what contributes more to nature's ends,
Than what to social peace and order tends ?
Is not the Suicide a foe to these ?
In him, sure, nature's enemy one sees !
See, thro' the world, what order meets the sight ;
In order sure th' Almighty must delight.
His Maker then can base self-murder please ?
In him the foe of God one surely sees.



Ah! then, the crime of Suicide t'assert,
The plans of nature and of God avert;
Disturb the order of the world, and thence
Invade the privilege of Providence;
Sure is not impious, unjust, and vain,
As modern Sceptics foolishly maintain.
True, tho' inverted be her genial laws,
Nature still triumphs in her sacred cause.
True, Heav'n his purpose may have wiselier arm'd,
Than by mere human efforts to be harm'd;
To his great views, unerring wisdom, call'd,
By man no doubt, they ne'er can be forestall'd;
But who, to view, the truth of this makes known,
Who proves the act no injury has done?
Sure, marks of injury the act can shew,
And men should argue but from what they know;
Or is the deed less criminal because
It merely *seems* to injure order's laws?
Surely in acts on lawless intent built,
In base premeditation there is guilt:
And tho' a wicked act may not succeed,
Th' attempt is oft as guilty as the deed.
Man knows th' event, with eyes wide open sees,
The harm he does for his mere temp'ral ease.
For individual comfort dares to die,
Cancels the social and the nat'ral tie:
Starts from his rank, his order'd station here,
And dares when duty calls to disappear;
For who so vainly thus suppose e'er can,
The principles with which compos'd is man:
When he's the prey of mean corruption's worm,
Will in the universe their part perform;
Will be as useful, as much service give,
As when the individual they compos'd alive.
Who says that Suicide's no more the source
Of harm, than turning of a river's course?
Who too, the deed no more is shall declare,
Than just to quit a room and walk in open air?
In sceptic minds such thoughts alone arose,
And he who thinks so—sure is one of those,

Who all things judge by matter's hidden laws,
And place in motion the primeval cause ;
Man, to creation thus, is they affirm,
No more than a mere oyster or a worm !
Self-murder thence, they impiously assert,
The cause of nature cannot change or hurt.
As much an act of Providence they say,
As death obtain'd by natural decay.
Ah ! when a man pulls down a house, do we
As much the act of Providence there see,
As when it falls by natural decay,
Or by itself in any other way ?
Did you a neighbour's house pull down in spite,
Has he to think you innocent a right ?
Will he forgive you under this pretence,
It was no act of thine, but Providence ?
Can you his rage and vengeance over-awe,
By proving that it fell by motion's law ?
What ever passion 'twas that urg'd the deed,
Will he believe it was by God decreed ?
Urg'd by the mind, by human thought conceiv'd,
The act of Suicide must be atchiev'd ;
At once engag'd that object to fulfil,
There's human motive, human mind and will.
When passion strikes, uninfluenc'd by mind,
No crime in that, or any act we find ;
For then indeed we justly trace its cause,
In nature's fix'd and universal laws ;
But when both will and mind give free consent,
There's equal guilt in deed and in intent.
Did the brute race, to their own lives give pause,
The act would not be criminal, because
Devoid of reason, free-born will and mind,
To right or wrong beyond their sphere they're
blind.
See, desp'rate acts of madmen guiltless thence,
Because unurg'd by mental influence :
Hence children we forgive when laws they break,
Tho' passion's strong, their reason's young and weak ;

But, when the mind in its due force enacts,
Excuse we crimes because 'tis passion acts?
When mind sufficient is, mature and strong,
To rule those passions that to man belong;
In lawless acts, when men their pow'rs misuse,
On passion's score do we the crime excuse?
Or shall a man our pardon thus implore,
By tracing their first cause at nature's door?
A deep premeditated breach of laws,
Attribute thus, to merely a blind cause?
To sightless instinct, heav'n-taught mind reduce,
And thus for crimes plead nature in excuse?
Could we amuse a jury with that tale,
And plead, that nature ever will prevail?
Or say we murder cannot be a crime,
Because 'twas passion triumph'd at the time?
Do we not, turning passion's veil aside,
See will and mind the guilty action guide?
By conscience warn'd, that monitor within,
Man knows what virtue is and what is sin.
When passion's suffer'd over reason's claim,
To get th' advantage, is not man to blame?
Or since he reason calls not to his aid,
At nature's door must mental crimes be laid?
'Tis not the act on which the crime awaits,
Th' assent of mind it is the guilt creates.
From Nature's sacred code of gen'ral laws,
In vain 'gainst this, can sceptics urge a clause?
True, by those certain laws it doth appear,
All things are govern'd in this mortal sphere.
By passion this, and this by matter's laws,
But each acts merely as a second cause.
In deaths that come in nature's usual way,
These causes then the Great First Cause obey;
Yes, when the blow of death is fairly giv'n,
Matter's the secondary cause to heav'n;
But when death comes by murder's timeless force,
The mind and will of man's its only source.
Passion and matter's pow'rs, the mind of man,
Basely usurps t'effect his wicked plan;

Turns their strong purpose from their usual course,
To give his murth'rous views effect and force.
Thus of self-murder none can trace the crime,
At Nature's door, nor blame the Great Sublime;
Nor fix in passion's impulse the foul blame,
Nor hide in motion's secret laws the shame.
The guilt, the shame, the folly too we find,
Centre alone in human will and mind.
Those gen'ral laws, in that most murth'rous act,
But the mere part of instruments enact.
The instrument we never sure can blame,
No guilt we in the instrument can name.
When on the block a victim's doom'd to bleed,
The axe can ne'er be guilty of the deed;
Nor guilty th'executioner can be,
In him we but the second cause can see;
The guilt lays where the act was first design'd,
In that which order'd it,—man's will and mind.
Who then of Suicide can trace the cause,
In hallow'd nature's genial gen'ral laws?
Egregious error, then, to try a deed,
By matter's law, that springs from mental seed.
What! motives try that spring from mind direct,
From reason,—human will, and intellect!
What! judge an act that from such causes springs,
By those same laws they try all senseless things;
What! judge the impulse of the human heart,
By laws that turn a wheel or wing a dart:
By the same law that gives an engine force,
That guides a life-drop and a river's course:
That makes the blood thro' ev'ry art'ry rush,
Glow in the heart and in the visage blush.
What! trace those potent acts of mental pow'r,
At blind infuriate passion's secret door;
Passion, whose pow'r to guide and rage to bind,
Expressly given was this wondrous mind.
What! in the scale of gravitation place,
The mind! whose cause and movements none can
trace.

That—in whose union with the body's known
To act with secret sympathy alone ;
Mind ! that by far superior is to all,
That, which, alone, we independent call !
That, which, each day to fresh perfection tends,
Unknown too, where begun or where it ends ;
Retains its pow'rs when nature feels decay,
When motion slackens, matter wastes away ;
Is oft more brilliant in that awful hour,
When life and matter too, resign their pow'r.
Mind ! that increases as it grows at length,
And sheds new beauties as it gathers strength ;
That,—which alone, of brutes, makes man far
more,
With angels equal, next to God in pow'r :
The gift of heav'n,—of heav'n itself a part,
And stamps his image on the human heart.
Mind,—which not sway'd by nature's gen'ral laws,
Is subject only to their Great First Cause ;
In which we pow'rs immortal too decry,
Whose works too like itself can never die :
That, which, surpasses vast creation's whole !
Yes—mind, that is,—that is in fact, the soul.
What ! shall the efforts of this wond'rous cause,
Be tried by Nature's blind and gen'ral laws ?
Ah ! then, shall Suicide no crime be deem'd,
Since hence an act of nature 'tis esteem'd ?
To be an act divine too claim pretence,
Since nature is an act of Providence !
Ah ! if such laws prove Suicide no crime,
There's nothing wrong in past or present time ;
No act howe'er injurious or base,
Can e'er be criminal in such a case.
No crime 'tis thence for sons to kill their sire,
In nature's course the victim doth expire :
E'en from whate'er the cruel motive springs,
'Tis just and in the usual course of things :
Alike an act of God himself design'd,
As that which orders and conducts the wind ;

In murder's blow there no more guilt is shewn,
Than when a man dies by a falling stone;
Both acts proceed but from the self same cause,
From providence or nature's gen'ral laws.

Prepost'rous error! base and wicked thought!
By madmen only or by sceptics taught,
Nay, death obtain'd by unfair murth'rous force,
Can ne'er be said to be in nature's course:
And Suicide an effort is we find,
Of human motive, human will and mind.

Again say, should th' exact result of mind,
By matter's law be judg'd, be tried, defin'd?
Should acts that spring from mere volition's cause,
Be judg'd by thoughtless matter's hidden laws?
Does Suicide's premeditated blow,
From blind unconscious causes merely flow?
Shall we a deed by those same laws assay,
By which the feelings and the passions play?
When by a knife man bids his heart to bleed,
Mere motion is it first propels the deed?
When on his sword a man shall basely fall,
Can we that act mere gravitation call?
In the base deed do we not surely see,
A soul enrag'd and struggling to be free?
Are we not by the circumstances taught,
The action sprang from the impulse of thought?
Yes, the mere act of human mind, see thence,
Not urg'd by Nature's law or Providence;
Not urg'd by Providence as some imply,
At least must mean so, or must God deny.

Yes, since in human beings thus we find,
A principle distinct is human mind;
Not wholly subject to the gen'ral laws,
Nor in whose source we cannot trace its cause:
Its actions then most justly 'tis implied,
By those blind laws should not be judg'd or tried,
Mind is the sole, th' immediate gift of heav'n,
And not like other gifts thro' nature giv'n;
The mind, by inspiration is acquir'd,
And should be judg'd by that which is inspir'd:

The mind, whose source in myst'ry is conceal'd,
 Is judg'd by laws from heav'n alone reveal'd.
 By laws divine by God alone decreed,
 Which in his sacred book of life we read.
 There, no excuse, or e'en pretence we find,
 For Suicide, that act of will and mind ;
 And who shall doubt such laws divine exist,
 That, inspiration cannot be insist ?
 What ! doubt we there can be revealed laws,
 Since nat'ral law for them no inf'rence draws ?
 What ! shall we doubt they're not reveal'd of heav'n,
 Because their cause thro' nature is not giv'n ?
 Say,—can we trace the origin of mind ?
 The source of genius too in nature find !
 Since then, thro' nature's medium mind's not giv'n,
 Shall we then doubt it is the gift of heav'n ?
 Since then, the good, the wise, the Great First
 Cause,

Can independent of his gen'ral laws,
 Of nature's medium independent too,
 The human frame with genius can endue :
 Without those means he surely also can
 With inspiration fire the soul of man :
 Can make his laws be read by human eyes,
 As well as teach them to survey the skies :
 Send down his scriptures too, as eas'ly may,
 As he a bright idea can convey.

O ! do not sacred laws and writings doubt,
 Because their cause in nature's not found out ;
 By the same means, God sends down genius' fire,
 He inspiration sends and can inspire.
 Neither, in nature's secret cause is found,
 Yet both we must acknowledge do abound.

The sun, thro' many ages yet had shone,
 Ere its grand system was distinctly known :
 And but of late was felt and understood,
 The wond'rous circulation of the blood ;
 But Newton rising nam'd the solar laws ;
 Learn'd Harvey too explain'd pulsation's cause :

Till then, these secrets lay involv'd in night,
Were doubted too, as now, is mental light;
But time may come whose genial pow'r alone,
Gave added glory to the glorious sun;
Trac'd the life-blood thro' ev'ry secret vein,
From heart to hand, from hand to heart again;
That happy time may come, when thought may find,
The source, whence springs that wondrous pow'r the
mind:

When man shall know himself, th' eye shall see th'
eye,

And mind see mind, and form its form descry.
For lo! the mind each day displays new pow'r,
And tends to fresh perfection ev'ry hour.
Ah! then what scenes yet hid in nature's night,
May beam sublimely on the mental sight:
Ah! then great mind! thy source may be found out,
At present veil'd in mystery and doubt.
Since what, conceptions of the mind, we call,
Of things, are far superior to all;
So is the cause of those conceptions too,
Far plac'd above all human thought and view.
Enough for us to know, to mind belong,
At least, the means of knowing right and wrong.

E'en then say if of passion's wondrous force,
God is primeval cause and gen'ral source;
Should we the acts of rage or pride define,
And call the deeds of malice all divine?
Has he not man endow'd with mind and will,
The passion's fury and wild rage to still?
Hath he not given conscience, mind and sense,
And made them least dependent of his Providence;
At least not subject to the gen'ral laws,
But unto man and to the primal cause:
Can then, an act, that springs from will and mind,
Be justly said to be by God design'd?
Of base self-murder, to avert the blame,
Shall man own God its cause and hence the shame?
Or when the heav'nly gifts man shall abuse,
And of his will and mind make wicked use;

What, altho' subject to the allwise God,
 Their progress he averts not with his rod;
 But in the course of his just Providence,
Permits the acts of human will and sense:
 Is man less guilty of the impious deed,
 Or is to heav'n the shame of it decreed?
 Is God to blame, because he shall entrust
 Mankind, with what he uses so unjust?
 If Jove, his thunders lends to mortal hands,
 Which, man to baneful purposes expands;
 Is Jove to blame, or do his thunders err?
 Does not rash man the guilt alone incur?

Whene'er from guilt man strives himself to clear,
 It is by making heav'n to blame appear.
 Hence some thus say, since God the deed permits,
 From guilt it man most certainly acquits:
 True, all things we most certainly must own
 Are by th' Almighty's grand *permission* done.
 Nor mean we thus, that he all things *decrees*,
 But that he can *avert* then, should he *please*:
 Yet how can that expunge the stain of guilt,
 When man's own blood is by his own hands spilt?
 Is he less guilty of the murth'rous crime,
 Because the wisdom of the Great Sublime,
 For some wise end unknown to human sense,
Permits it in his awful Providence?
 What! since he sends no angel here below,
 T'avert the vile premeditated blow.
 Is the foul desp'rate deed the less a crime,
 Or is the man less guilty at the time?
 If so,—then criminal no actions are,
 Unlawful, cruel, villainous, howe'er:
 If acts are guiltless, since God for a time,
 Permits their force, e'en murder is no crime:
 For heav'n with equal and attentive eye,
 Beholds a hero and a felon die:
 Permits alike the blow of Suicide,
 As that by which a murder'd lover died.
 Oh say! if God descend from heav'n must,
 By force direct, t'oblige men to be just!

Since he compels not, man, his pow'r to own,
His name t'adore and trust on him alone ;
When he unpunish'd, that great pow'r defies,
Is he less guilty in th' Almighty's eyes ?
Since he permits his base impiety,
Is it a proof therein no guilt can be ?
Since he o'errules it not with vengeance' rod,
Is man less guilty ? or is God less God ?
Can we no blame then in self-murder see,
Because Omniscience suffers it to be ?

But who, with sceptics of this impious time,
Says God does nothing to prevent the crime ?
By nature, has he not well stor'd the heart,
With principles that to that end impart ?
Than love of life, what can more potent prove ?
See, self-esteem too, blended with self-love :—
These, which the best preservatives should be,
Of human virtue and integrity.
With reason has he not endow'd the mind,
By which the force of passion is refin'd ?
To its vast pow'rs too say, doth not belong,
Conscience, that arbiter 'twixt right and wrong ?
Has he not also 'gainst the baneful deed,
An universal special law decreed ?
Has he not op'd the book of life eterne,
Where man encouragement to live may learn ?
It's sacred page, inform'd with future bliss,
That he might bear his hapless state in this.
Plac'd Fortitude and Patience too at hand,
Like guardian angels ever at command !
If we by passion, vainly turn aside,
These, our companion, friend, and surest guide :—
The dire effects that must the act await,
Base man alone must answer, and not fate.
One truth is clear,—God has his duty done,
And if man errs, the guilt is his alone.

BOOK THE FOURTH

Is divided into Two Sections, the First of which proves the invalidity of that encouragement (to the commission of Suicide), which is derived from the great names of its advocates, &c. The form, character, and personification of Suicide, is then described, concluding with the Story of Acasto, &c. The Second Section commences with a brief historical account of the rise and progress of Suicide,—its prevalence in England,—the supposed and actual causes thereof;—hints are then given for the proper treatment and cure of persons under the influence, either of melancholy or insanity; stating also the expediency and best possible means of averting the growing evil; the whole concluding with warning, serious warning, and dissuasive advice to one under contemplation of the crime.

ARGUMENT I.

The haunts of Suicide, the afflicted heart and troubled mind.—It sometimes intrudes where learning and philosophy hold their sway. Mankind too often tempted to Self-murder, by the great names of those who have been advocates for the act; the invalidity and absurdity of encouragement derived from such a source. Ere such tempt a man to seek the blow of Self-destruction, he should first enquire if he has their noble and virtuous motives. The names of those who oppose the crime are far superior, among which we may include Virtue, Nature, and Nature's God.—Suicide described, its form, character, and personification;—a Parisian anecdote;—recommendation to shun the discourse of him who is the advocate of the crime,—another anecdote. The arguments deduced by the supporters of Suicide, are derived from the weakness of their own imaginations, and not from those noble sources from whence they affect to trace them. The social tie the most forcible and universal argument against the crime; its superior potency illustrated in the story of Acasto, the advocate of Suicide reformed, which concludes the Section.

THE INVALIDITY OF ENCOURAGEMENT DERIVED FROM THE GREAT NAMES OF ITS ADVOCATES.

The Character and Personification of Suicide.

AH Suicide ! foul phantom of the brain,
That seldom haunts the human heart in vain ;
But like the ghosts describ'd in days of yore,
'Thou com'st as fell in horror as in pow'r :
They, where sad desolation wept, appear'd,
And where affliction dwells thine head is rear'd.
Old ruin'd abbies,—gothic temples drear,
Dismantled tow'rs, abodes of doubt and fear,
Old broken walls, dark caverns, beetling steeps,
Or near the spot where death's dark angel sleeps ;
There, did the sprites of superstition's day,
Their vigils keep and hold their fearful sway.
Thus haunts the subtle phantom Suicide,
The mental fabric rear'd for nature's pride ;
Yes,—where affliction's hand severe, unkind,
O'erturns the goodly structure of the mind ; —
Its noble faculties in ruins leaves,
Of all its beauty, all its pow'r bereaves.
Yes,—where fell sorrow singles out th' oppress'd,
Makes direful inroads in the human breast,
Breaks down the wondrous fabric of the heart,
Its feelings injures past the aid of art ;
There the foul phantom,—awful Suicide,
Delights in frantic, hopeless state t'abide ;
There,—o'er its tott'ring remains,—ah ! there,
With moody frenzy, and aghast despair ;
Fast hand in hand, the phantom keeps its place,
Laughing returning reason in the face ;

Or with loud yells and dismal frenzied stare,
Thence, banishing both peace and joy for e'er.
Ah! then, the gory, horrid triumph's won,
Ah! then, the work of death goes bravely on.

But not the broken heart or ruin'd mind,
The only haunt is of this fiend unkind;
He sometimes visits e'en the proud estate,
Where wisdom, worth, and valour dwell elate.
E'en in the breast of feelings most refin'd,
Most noble heart and most enlighten'd mind;
The fiend intrudes with equal impudence,
And braves the source of folly and of sense.

Yes, in the mansion of a Pliny's (7) mind,
It seems the monster could a welcome find;
Great Cato follow'd, as if Plato (8) taught,
And Addison (9) illustrated the thought:
The learned Hume (10) his logic pow'rs combines,
To gild the poison of a Welter's (11) lines.
Like Job's deceitful wife, they tempting cry,
"What, keep your purity! curse God and die."

Lur'd by their subtle arts, the wond'ring world
Flock to the sable standard they unfurl'd;
Led on by Brutus, thro' whose suicide,
They think the hero's seen in all his pride:
In lovely chaste Lucretia, fondly too,
New lines of beauty, tasteful sceptics view;
In Sappho's lover's leap, suppose the muse,
That sure retreat, did not disdain to choose:
Learning and coolness in a Robeck (12) lies,
Because he writes a book on it, then dies;
Whilst they in Cleopatra gladly see,
The act array'd in regal majesty;
Triumphant as they view an Otho bleed,
Cast th' imperial mantle o'er the deed.

The Suicide, the lustre of these names,
With new and added argument enflames:
Unconscious, pride rules what the learn'd aver,
To 'stablish novel theories they err;
By prejudice the strongest judgment's weak,
And slightest causes wounded hearts will break.

In their's the self-same motive we discern,
That bade chaste Dian's costly temple burn;
With these, oft notoriety is fame,
And some do any thing to get a name.
In rules of art or reason not o'er nice,
For this some swear, the sun's a ball of ice!

Ne'er tempted be by lustre of a name,
To good and bad names lend an equal fame;
And like the prism, cast the loveliest hues,
O'er the worst sights the human sense e'er views.
Besides, ere such tempt you to meet your grave,
First learn if you, their virtuous motives have.
Ere you seek death, because by Cato sought,
See, if from heav'n you have his mantle caught;
Are you as well prepar'd to die as he,
Cato the good! whom gods with envy see!
By one so noble the fell deed was done,
It seem'd but like a spot upon the sun.
Hast thou those virtues of such glorious blaze,
As thus t'eclipse the action with their rays:
First see, ere you for death like his look round,
If you a virtue have to grace the wound;
And ah! how many noble, wise, and good,
Have borne their woes with decent fortitude!
Say, are your sorrows worse than their's t'endure?
Or will your pains admit no other cure?
Say,—have not thousands borne the worst of grief,
And sought in patience only sweet relief?
Whose lives were far more amiable, more fair,
With whom none could in sense and truth compare;
Yet they the path of Suicide ne'er trod,
Nor rush'd, unask'd, to meet an awful God;
Tho' nature's self might change, such wounds to
close,

In grief so fair, so lovely in their woes!
Lo! to whose aid e'en angels might come down,
Whilst men perhaps such pains as your's disown.

But lo! if names give argument new pow'rs
O'er Suicide, the conquest's surely ours.

Pythagoras (13) among the ancients stands,
 To seal its doom with philosophic hands ;
 Whilst brave Cleomenes (14) too points the pause,
 And from a throne condemns the desp'rate cause ;
 Great Socrates, (15) like Job, thought virtue was
 combin'd,
 In patient resignation and content of mind ;
 Shakespeare (16) whose mind, great Nature's store-
 house was,
 In Hamlet, boldly combats the vain cause ;
 Milton (17) whose spirit drew th' empyreal air,
 With an archangel's voice, denounc'd despair ;
 Lo ! Thomson (18) too, while tracing nature's pride,
 Just turns aside, to frown at Suicide ;
 Rousseau (19) upholds the phantom to our view,
 T' expose its blackness and its folly too,
 Clads the ghast monster in its gaudiest dress,
 That we may see it plainer and admire it less.
 Fitzosborne, Johnson, and full many more,
 Deduce of arguments an endless store ;
 Whilst to complete the glorious list of names,
 Virtue, aloud against the deed proclaims ;
 Nature's great self, the act has disavow'd,
 And above all, Nature's omniscient God !

Illustrious army ! who, resists such pow'rs ?
 With such a force, the victory must be ours.
 A bloodless quarrel 'tis, we boldly wage,
 For truth and reason we alone engage.
 Should on our side, but just success be found,
 With laurels innocent, we must be crown'd.
 Our arms are wisdom and humanity,—
 Error subdued, shall be our victory.
 Our trophies too—(best glory of the mind !)
 Th' eternal gratitude of all mankind.

Gaunt Suicide ! who with a frenzied smile,
 Strides like a vast Colossus, o'er this isle ;
 Religion's pale o'erstepping, virtue's fence,
 The bounds of honour, duty, and of sense ;
 Ah ! fain would I, thy varied form uphold,
 No pencil e'er can paint, no tongue unfold ;

Those haggard looks,—and eyes that wildly roll,
 Now with a dagger,—now a poison'd bowl;
 Now hurried in thy step,—with anguish shook,—
 Now, cool deliberate calmless, in thy look;
 Now pale with grief,—of melancholic hue;
 Now whimsical, and sometimes witty too:
 Yes, witty—like the Gallic lover, who (20)
 In love neglected, bid this life adieu;
 And lest the act should not enough display,
 The love he bore his fair one, night and day,
 By will desires, the little fat they find,
 Grief for her scorn, left in his corse behind,
 Should in a candle, hum'rously be made,
 By whose death-light she read these lines, which
 said,

“ The scheme was meant, a sincere proof to give,
 “ He burnt for her, when dead, as when alive.”

Ah Suicide! what shape you please, assume,
 A foe to social order, thee I doom.
 The advocate of Suicide e'er shun,
 Nor friend to God or man,—the friend of none:
 He neither can fulfil the duty ow'd,
 Or to his country, to his friend or God.
 A selfish man can never be a friend;
 To what, but self, does Suicide attend?

That noble character, the patriot see;
 Such, the self-murderer can never be;
 He, that fair life, devotes to selfish shame,
 To which his country has a nobler claim;
 In one mean effort spends that energy,
 Which might be bravely us'd for liberty.

As to his God—he is an open foe,
 For he who gives his bosom, its death-blow;
 At once mistrusts God's pow'r to fulfil,
 And acts in vile rebellion to his will.

Yes,—in the act on self alone he thinks,
 Heedless from what he either swerves or shrinks.
 Ah! nonsense 'tis, to say the Suicide
 Is influenc'd by ought than self beside;

Nor virtue, sense, his motive can we call,
 Who in that hour scarce motive has at all :
 Impell'd by passion, frenzy, pride, or grief,
 He thoughtless, and unthought of, seeks relief,
 What motive can he have in such an hour,
 Who scarce to think at all has any pow'r?
 A partial senselessness precedes the deed,
 As torpor strong convulsions e'er precede.
 Unfix'd and wav'ring in the breath of doubt,
 Just like a candle snuff e're it goes out.
 So he resolves, now hesitates, then sighs—
 Recedes, returns, then plunges in and dies!
 Let in Self-murder's scale what will be tost,
 Lo! in that vortex self, all, all is lost.

But some there are by self-persuasion mov'd,
 The path of Suicide have so approv'd :
 E'en at the prospect, nature scarce recoils,
 And they can contemplate its form with smiles.
 Nature to soothe, when life must part, conceit may
 serve,

As surgeons, when they amputate, may deaden nerve,
 Ah! mad enthusiast! who amidst of guile,
 Can smother feeling and put on a smile;
 Shun his discourse, his language ne'er believe,
 Nor let his looks serene, thine heart deceive.
 "He's like the man, in whose face fever's flush,
 Gives him, midst dire disease, health's seeming
 blush."

Shun his discourse, and rather pain endure,
 Than try the means he points out as a cure.
 Sorrow's specific, he asserts, is death,
 Declares that mis'ry ceases with your breath.
 But is that true? how, tell me, can he know?
 Who from the grave e'er rose to tell him so?
 The wise, in med'cine's virtue ne'er believe,
 Unless they've had good proof that 'twill relieve;
 But Suicide runs madly to the grave,
 Unsure if it relief or sting can have.

Never but once was it well known that grief,
 Found in Self-murder actual relief;

And that was by th' attempt and not the deed,
 Relief thus come in woe's sad hour of need ;
 Just as a child is from the pain endur'd,
 Not by the draught, but by the sight on't cur'd.
 Yes,—once there was a thing, misnam'd a man,
 Who even wish'd to shorten life's short span ;
 Tho' he more woes had not than is man's share,
 They were he thought too much for him to bear :
 To end those woes, he thus resolv'd to die,
 And for that end, a well-known method try ;—
 He, by a rope thought best his griefs to check,
 And shorten life by lengthening his neck.
 A friendly beam that ran across his room,
 At once invited and atchiev'd his doom.
 Scarce had he hung a minute, e'en, when, lo !
 The beam gave way and down he fell below :
 A strange event, but stranger still than all,
 A heap of gold accompanied his fall.
 Some miser had his treasure there conceal'd,
 Which now, the fallen beam to view reveal'd ?
 The noise call'd up his house-maid full of wonder,
 Who, by its loudness thought it must be thunder.
 “ Thunder ! you fool,” cries he ;—“ but stay, let's
 hold,
 “ It may be so, for here's a show'r of gold.”
 O'erjoy'd he snatches up the glitt'ring prize,
 And death no longer tempts his gladden'd eyes !
 Jove to his ease, as he to Danæ came,
 When in a show'r of gold he quench'd his flame.
 In this attempt, and truly this alone,
 Was sweet relief by Suicide e'er known.
 Avoid I say,—avoid his vain discourse,
 Who boasts there's virtue in that base resource.
 Let him assert, the inference he draws,
 Is consonant with God and Nature's laws.
 Each author, let him boast, he has read o'er :
 Is deeply read in ancient, attic lore.
 Yes, he enough has read, and has read such,
 'Twere better if he had not read so much.

A little here of Hobbes—of Plato, there,
Of Seneca, a deal,—much more, Voltaire,
With thoughts dissimilar thus clogg'd his brain,
Such contrarieties, conceits so vain,
No wonder in his weak o'ercharged mind,
A monster such as Suicide we find.

He who the fam'd Pierean streams glides o'er,
Or learning's sacred depths presumes t'explore,
In ardent hopes, from such a source sublime,
To find pretences for self-murder's crime ;—
Be it not said, he there just cause describes,
Tho' he with Plato in his hand, too, dies :
The error he commits, as we may find,
Springs from his own weak, dull, and bungling
mind.

The diver thus, t'obtain the coral tries,
His head against the bottom strikes, and dies !
Or like the man, who in a silly mood,
Observ'd the moon's reflection in the flood ;—
T'obtain the false ideal glittering prize,
He flounders in the stream no more to rise ;
For after all—when fancying he saw,
For suicide pretence, in reason's law ;
Lo ! 'twas not there the light of reason shin'd,
But the reflection of his own weak mind !
Yes, 'tis the vapour of his own weak brain,
His own imagination, weak and vain,
Whose visionary pow'r thus seals his doom,
And lures him on to self-destruction's tomb.
Nor should we wonder, vapours so confin'd,
Can thus o'erthrow the body and the mind ;
And e'en to act with such unnat'ral force,
As to destroy its very parent source.

The pow'r of steam such potency too brings,
And drains the river dry, from whence it springs.

Ah ! shun, again I say, his vain discourse,
Who boasts that Suicide's a just resource.
To virtue's eye, he may be eas'ly known,
He who his maker's being dares disown ;—

He who, laws human and divine, defies,
Disowns all social and all nat'ral ties,
His country's claims—his being's sacred end;
The name of neighbour, relative or friend :
In him—in such as he—base Suicide;
In all its horrors see personified !

But why him shun ? if baneful his discourse,
Why don't he also fall beneath its force ?
He seems in perfect safety and at ease ;
Sure, in his principles none danger sees !—
Nay ; still I say, avoid his subtle guile,
Nor think him harmless tho' he wears a smile :
Tho' 'midst the venom that he sheds around,
Himself seems safe, he's not less dang'rous found :
The serpent safe, thus 'midst that venom lives,
Which pain and instant death to others gives :
With equal fervency, the life-blood flows,
Around that snaky heart whence subtlest poison
flows.

The good Acasto, too, was one of those
Who harbour'd in his breast this worst of foes.
He also thought, in life's dull hour of grief,
Self-murder was a wise and just relief.
Lur'd by its subtle, and dire influence,
He drowns the voice of virtue, truth and sense ;
All laws divine and human, dares defy,
Yea, cancels all—all but the social tie.
The social tie, contains such force alone,
That not e'en Atheists can its truth disown :
That, to Acasto, such conviction gives,
He sees his error, drops the knife, and lives !
O ! may all hearts by wicked thoughts inflam'd,
As was Acasto's, be like him reclaim'd.

ACASTO,

(THE ADVOCATE OF SUICIDE RECLAIMED.)

WHILE seated at the festal board of pleasure,
Acasto heard the loss of all his treasure.

His ship, that bore the wealth of hard earn'd toil,
A pirate seiz'd, and tow'd away the spoil;

Dreadful such news at such an hour must be,
When patience is disarm'd by *luxury*!

Yet, he receiv'd the sudden, awful shock,

With smiles that seem'd its violence to mock.

His wond'rous fortitude, each friend admires,

As scarcely pale, he bows, and then retires.

"Ah no!" cries he, "I'm not of all bereft,

"A precious jewel in my hand is left."

Lo! 'twas a knife, he such a jewel call'd,

Whose blade he kiss'd with ardour unappall'd;

Then, as he held it, slanting to his breast,

"Aye, that's the way," cries he, "it points to
rest.

"But hold—will that my creditors suffice?

"'Twill surely shew not honour over nice.

"Nature's vast debt I pay, before 'tis due,

"But other debts I leave unpaid, 'tis true!

"Honour's a law, by human trick enact,

"Ne'er mind, so virtue justifies the act;

"But can the act, to virtue be allied,

"Whose motive centres in ignoble pride?

"Besides, if fearful of the world's foul blame,

"Deep solitude as well may hide the shame.

“ True, true! but what to me is virtue, tho’
“ ’Twill soon forsake me, when to gaol I go—
“ I’ll strike the blow—the Roman, I’ll enact,
“ For sure, religion don’t forbid the act!
“ Doth it not say to man, “ thou shalt not kill?”
“ Be patient too—and do I that fulfil?
“ Surely therein a special law we read,
“ Direct against self murder’s crime decreed.
“ Religion’s followers, must think it so,
“ Or else, why thro’ such suff’rings do they go!
“ Would they not pain have shunn’d by Suicide,
“ If they had thought the act was justified.
“ Would Jesus Christ, who well affliction knew,
“ Tell us to *bear* it, if that deed would do?—
“ Ah yes—religion disavows the deed,
“ But that to mind, I surely have no need;
“ For lo, thus wretched as I now must be,
“ God and religion have no care for me!
“ I’ll kill myself—nor will I heed the laws,
“ Tho’ saints and sages at their shrine may pause;
“ If boldly thus defy God’s laws I can,
“ Why need I fear what are enact by man!
“ Tho’ I the laws of God and man o’erleap,
“ The laws of reason and of sense I keep—
“ In doing what?—in going none knows where;
“ ’Tis mere uncertainty—no sense is there.
“ The world will say, ‘to sense he can’t presume.
“ His thoughts scarce bright enough to pierce No-
vember’s gloom;
“ His mind so small, so little light was there,
“ E’en at noon-day it ran against despair.’
“ Besides, I know what woes I here must bear,
“ But in the future state! what woes are there?
“ Well, well—although the act has no pretence,
“ To virtue, justice, honesty, or sense,
“ Yet thus to face the terrors of the grave,
“ They will, at least, acknowledge must be brave:
“ And listen now my soul! what sounds are there?”
(’Twas the Tow’r guns resounding thro’ the air)

“Lo there,” cried he, “how they report the deeds,
“Of him, who bravely and who nobly bleeds.
“Let me then die—nor hesitate once more,
“But fancy earth’s applause in yonder roar.”
Thus spake Acasto, and in haste he made
Straight progress to some secret, silent shade.
It happen’d so, as onwards fast he press’d,
A man he met, just as a soldier dress’d.
“Comrade!” he cries—“grief has given thee scars,
“Why seek for more, in these uncertain wars?”
“Yes, grief has made sad havoc,” he replied,
“I’m weary of my life,” and there he sigh’d.
“Now, tir’d of life, I soon could find a grave,
“If suicide was noble, just, or brave!
“Besides, you know, life’s not for self alone,
“Society thereto, a claim makes known.
“Nor just nor brave to take it, then, away,
“For then, the world you rob, as one may say.
“If brave the act, so might the thief be call’d,
“Because he robs you, boldly, unappall’d.
“Aware of that, the foot-guards I have join’d,
“Thus, my despair by virtue is refin’d.
“Soon, in the ranks, I’ll end my mortal strife,
“And close, with honour too, my painful life.
“Ne’er by self-murder, we that life should sell
“We to our country can devote so well.
“If tir’d of life—fall in the British ranks;
“Your country cheers your last sigh with its thanks.”
“True,” said Acasto—as he bade “adieu,”
“If to die bravely, I must copy you.
“But enervate with lux’ry and disease,
“And aged too—I cannot march with ease.
“Well, well, no matter—if I can’t be brave,
“Let desperation lead me to my grave.
“The world therein, at least, may surely see,
“An act of over-sensibility.
“For, had I relatives to mourn my end,
“Did that which ease gave me, e’en wound my
friend;

"Not for the world, then, would I strike the blow;
 "But no one heeds me, if I stay or go.
 "Pain to myself and useless to the world,
 "By death alone, relief seems now unfurl'd."
 So saying—from his sleeve, he drew the knife,
 "Farewell," he cried—"thus ends with woe my
 life."

Scarce said—when lo! he heard a dreadful scream;
 He stood alarm'd as one wak'd from a dream.
 Another shriek—yet louder thwarts his plan,
 And to the spot from whence it came, he ran;
 Two men, in masks, a female dragg'd along,
 Against his weaken'd arm, a force too strong;
 However, wishing and not fearing death,
 He soon draws near them, and "hold off," he saith;
 The villains, altho' mask'd and doubly arm'd,
 Ran from their hold, at his approach alarm'd.
 Quick at his feet the rescued fair one kneel'd,
 The kind act too, with grateful kisses seal'd.
 "What have I done!" the good Acasto cried—
 "Oh, more than friend or father," she replied—
 "You sav'd my life, my honour, and my store;
 "What less should parents do; what friends do more?"
 Struck as with light'ning, lo! Acasto stood,
 Amaz'd that one so weak, could do such good.
 "Enough," cried he—and threw away the knife,
 "Let none despair, however mean his life.
 "Tho' deaf to honour, virtue, reason, fame,
 "Society will e'er assert her claim.
 "Man, for the world is born—life's not his own,
 "Society thereto, a claim makes known.
 "Tho' mean his lot—let this be understood,
 "He always means has left of doing good.
 "Let none quit life, beneath the vague excuse,
 "That he to none, can longer be of use;
 "Whilst he can precept or example give,
 "It is his bounden duty still to live."
 Acasto then enclasp'd her to his breast,
 And thus a mind and heart reform'd express'd;

" If thanks at all for life preserv'd are due,
 " Grateful am I for life preserv'd by you.
 " So useless in this world seem'd I to be,
 " So wretched seem'd its uses too, to me,
 " That had I found not still I could do good,
 " Acasto now might welter in his blood:"—
 " Acasto! say'st thou?" quick exclaim'd the maid.
 " The same," says he.—" But why thus seem dis-
 may'd?"

" Nay, 'tis amazement mix'd with secret joy,
 " That thus each sense with trembling seems t' em-
 ploy:

" Take that," said she, (a casket holding forth,)
 " Containing jewels of intrinsic worth.
 " Lo! they are your's—give me that hand—'tis mine:
 " Take this too—lo! a daughter calls it thine."

Acasto scarcely heard the magic sound
 Of one long lost, but now most gladly found—

" My child! my child! it is, it is," he cried;
 (The rest by silence may be best implied.)

Caresses, such as tale ne'er told before,
 The first excess of joy, too, scarcely o'er;
 Firm on his knees the blest Acasto bent,
 And sighs of gratitude to heaven sent.

" Let none despair, whate'er their lot may be,
 " Nor doubt the Pow'r, they don't directly see;
 " Nor mourn the dismal shade their station wears,
 " For after darkness 'tis the day appears;
 " The blackest cloud that rides upon the wind,
 " Has still a brilliant, glorious sun behind.
 " Thus Providence let none mistrust or blame;
 " In life's worst moment he is still the same.
 " Altho' unseen in woe's immediate hour,
 " He's not less kind, nor is he less in pow'r.
 " Let tears of hope this sacred truth embalm,
 " God is the same in tempest and in calm;
 " Nor think that trouble, altho' hard t' endure,
 " Is past relief, past hope, or past all cure;
 " With patience wait, nor idly close your breath;
 " Know time relieves from woe as well as death."

ARGUMENT I.

Brief History of Suicide, its rise and progress—The offspring of Melancholy and Despair. The story of Pandora an evidence the ancients did not sanction it—in fashion in ancient Greece and Rome—it subsides on the introduction of Christianity.—Laws enacted against it—their absurdity and inefficacy—its extreme prevalence in England, (hence considered a disease,) not the fault of its atmosphere, climate, or customs—it may proceed from our intemperate diet, as too solid food, abuse of ardent spirits, impatience and violence of temper, and want of sense to beguile the leisure hour, are productive of that melancholy which is the chief step to Suicide.—Custom sanctioned the act in Rome—no such excuse for it in England.—English credulity another cause of its prevalence—our fondness of Quacks—Suicide compared to them. Playful ridicule, change of scene, &c. a remedy for the disease, when it proceeds from melancholy not too deeply rooted.—Hints how to treat it, when it arises from affected imitation and voluntary motives, or from mental and corporeal anguish, or when it proceeds from insanity and melancholy. Hints for the properest treatment and most likely cure of those last-mentioned afflictions—The want of zeal in the church censured. Dramatic ridicule most efficacious in averting the progress of Self-murder.—An appeal to the Legislature to arrest its increasing prevalence, revise the existing law against it, and alter the form of the Inquest's verdict. The good and great called upon to do away the act by their example. General rules how to avoid being tempted to commit the crime. The whole concluding with advice to a person under contemplation of suicide.

A
BRIEF HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF

SUICIDE,

ITS PREVALENCE IN ENGLAND, CAUSES, AND

BEST MEANS OF PREVENTION.

AH Suicide! your looks say whence you are,
First born of Melancholy by Despair;
Oft cradled in the human heart, and fed
On the bright spirit that illumines the head!
The little reason heaven there has plac'd,
Thou prey'st upon with appetite unchaste.

To trace your history, in vain inclin'd:
Tyrant of the heart—murderer of mind!
Yet this one truth your character implies,
You never were with man in Paradise.
In places with life's joys supremely blest,
You could not be (at least) a welcome guest.

Form'd many years this changing world had been,
E'er in its annals thy first record's seen.
In the bright hist'ry of the golden age,
No act of thine once blots its hallow'd page;
For sev'ral ages, only here and there,
The history of nations can an act declare;
And that so seldom and so slightly nam'd,
As if the writer of his theme's asham'd.
What little of thee we from record learn,
You were not much esteem'd we may discern.
The story (21) of Pandora can declare
The ancients sanction'd hope, and not despair;

And in the law, Mosaic, is decreed
A solemn canon (3) 'gainst the impious deed.
In ancient Greece, in splendour you appear,
Which seat of learning might your cause endear,
Did it not seem, in those enlighten'd times,
They inspiration call'd the worst of crimes?
Some could the pow'r of hope and fear deny,
Indiff'rent was to them to sleep or die:
Some e'en affirm'd that pain was but ideal,
Till one, mov'd by the gout, confess'd 'twas real.

In Rome too, where ambition virtue was,
No wonder there espous'd was your base cause,
'Twas there, alone, a fashion you became,
And thousands chose you as the guide to Fame.
So deeply woven with civility,
Was savage virtue, barb'rous polity;
No wonder one of your imposing mien,
Was thus, with bleeding gladiator's seen;
By them reduc'd by usage to an art;
Hence, nations learn'd to act the Roman part.

But no excuse from that degen'rate time,
Can be inferr'd in favour of the crime;
For, ah! Rome then, the mistress of the world,
In luxury was lost, in vice was hurl'd.
By conquest drunk, and mad with selfish pride,
'Twas then Rome foster'd thee, base Suicide!
Whereas, in her far best and earlier days,
No virtuous citizen approv'd thy ways.
By your dark path, Posthumus did not run,
The shameful yoke, at Caudium, to shun;
Nor thus did Regulus attempt t' evade
The painful preparations for him made;
Nor did the laws give sanction to the act,
But rather 'tis recorded as a fact,
The Senate prais'd the courage so complete,
Whereby great Varro bore his dire defeat.
With virtue, thus, when Rome first rais'd her fame,
Ne'er once with honor's class'd thy barb'rous name.
When vice prevail'd, and in her later days,
'Twas then her citizens in thee sought praise,

Under Tiberius you flourish'd most ;
His cruel reign confirm'd in Rome your post.
Christianity's far milder sway, at length,
Wounded awhile, thy subtle, hideous strength,
Then Suicide, you fell into disgrace,
Christian forbearance wisely took your place ;
Laws were enact to crush the dreadful crime,
Such laws, however good, in that dark time ;
There virtue now is gone, by reason, said,
To punish more the living than the dead ;
Like all the laws in Superstition's code,
T' enslave the mind, but leave untam'd the blood.
What cares th' insensate Suicide, if found
Buried in cross-roads and unholy ground ?
If christian acts he scoffs at when alive,
When dead, cares he what christian rites you give ?
An useless law, in virtue and intent,
By gold perverted, well however meant ;
And England now may rival ancient Rome,
In those who seek, by suicide, their tomb.
Still slightly it prevails all o'er the world,
But England its foul standard has unfurl'd.

Ah ! whence doth this dire prevalence arise ?
In England why so common to our eyes ?
Nor custom sure, or climate can conspire,
To fan so wretched, and so dread a fire.
Daily such acts of suicide one sees,
Hence we're induc'd to think it a disease ;
If so, man is himself its only cause ;
Defects inherent give not life that pause ;
Nor comes it, like the fever, plague and pest,
Borne on the wings of heav'n's high behest.
Yes, this disease, as others mostly do,
Springs from man's passions, and his errors too ;
As that is to intemperance allied,
So suicide oft springs from human pride.
That, by o'er appetite, his death has caught ;
This dies by mere intemperance of thought.

Sure in the list, we ills enough may view,
Without thus adding Suicide thereto ;

That list, which some learn'd men compute at more,
 In number, than five hundred and threescore (22) !
 To which, if thus we suicide may add,
 Sure many more we may proclaim as bad.
 Many there are who pine in self-conceit,
 Which dies of self, like flies in their own sweet.
 This hapless wretch by lott'ry died, they tell,
 That, by a dice-box kill'd, untimely fell.
 Thousands of gin-shops die, we also find,
 Whilst the third bottle kills the wealthier kind.
 Some die of vain desires, some of wicked courses,
 And these of broken hearts, those of unbrok'n
 horses.

Then, above all, that worse than plague by far,
 By which die millions—cruel, cruel war !
 Sure as diseases, these can't be denied,
 If to the list we may add suicide.

Ah ! yes, in England, for self-murders fam'd,
 The inclination oft disease is nam'd ;
 Rising from morbid humours in the blood,
 Increas'd by spirits, and too solid food.
 Its climate too, in vapours so profuse,
 May to the melancholic phlegm conduce ;
 For, when November holds her dreary sway,
 Crowds of new victims perish ev'ry day.
 Ah, month ! in vain for suicide design'd,
 Say, can November's gloom thus dim the mind ?
 Nay, hold !—e'er minds from passion yet unclear,
 Thus throw the blame upon the atmosphere.
 Lo ! other clouds obscure the mental eye,
 Than those reflected from a wintry sky.
 The mind's eclips'd, and not the solar ray ;
 The light of reason, not the light of day.
 'Tis melancholy doth the mist impart,
 Whose fog, impatience, strikes upon the heart.
 Dull Melancholy ! haze of Stygian streams !
 Not shed, O Saturn ! from thy distant beams (23) ;
 An exhalation of a heart too vain,
 Not of astral influence o'er the brain !
 Nor stars, nor clouds, nor dreary mists,
 Create the gloom that o'er the mind exists :

If so—day's splendour might dispel it quite,
Ah, no!—true melancholy loves not light;
Hence, other causes than the atmosphere,
Bedim the mind with melancholy's tear.
No gleaming phantoms on the vapours ride,
To lure mankind to desp'rate suicide.
When o'er the mind the sun of sense don't rise,
Then meets the fog of ennui our eyes.
Yes, want of sense t' amuse the leisure hour,
Is the grand cause of melancholic pow'r;
Fill up the mind with thoughts, or great or good,
No room for melancholy then t'intrude.

For man to say that weather makes him dull,
Is in bold terms to satirize his skull;
For there, if all is right, (to sense akin),
When dark without, there is most light within.

To ardent drink, habitual recourse,
Lends melancholy often, added force;
As one fire's marr'd by one that's more intense,
So fiery drams put out the fire of sense:
Just as a taper dims the lightning's glare,
And not because strong drinks the better are.

Oft temper violent, impatient, and too warm,
Embodies melancholy in her saddest form:
Passion stagnates the current of the sense,
Impatience, like a vapour, rises thence;
Reason then lost in such an awful gloom,
The patient staggers to a self-sought tomb.

The fire, that burns too fierce, when fann'd no
more,
Always burns duller than it did before;
Thus temper, with great violence combin'd,
Leaves, when subsided, dullness o'er the mind,
Temper, too warm and violent, e'er will,
By grief and melancholy, soonest chill;
For which, philosophy accounts with ease,
For thus, hot water will the soonest freeze;
And this, thro' nature, is her rule, it seems,
Extremes rush in their opposite extremes.

Of melancholy, these, the causes are,
These fan the flame that light up dread despair ;
These, lure the thoughtless to self-murder's tomb,
Not foggy climates, or November's gloom.
England! in vain 'tis said, that, suicide
Is to thy varied atmosphere allied.
Vain foreigners may say 'tis so in jest,
For that's the weapon foreign wits use best.
Blest England! close begirt by rocks and sea,
Proves Nature e'er design'd thee to be free!
Then can it thus be thought she taints the air,
With man's most dreadful trammels, dire despair?
Are there not other climes where vapours drear,
Dark mists, and gloomy, cheerless fogs appear?
O'er Belgium's coasts what noisome vapours ride ;
Are they, thence, famous too for suicide?
See, the drear Hebrides o'erspread with gloom,
Hence, must that spot be thought self-murder's
tomb.

Since clouds and dreary fogs obscure the air,
Are they yclep'd the regions of despair?
Shall we for crimes, make weather a pretence,
Which spring from passion or the want of sense!
Ah! see the sun of sense dawn o'er the mind:
No mist of melancholy, then, we find;
Its potent beams, the Greenlander scarce knows,
Or would he cheerless crouch 'midst endless snows?
Yet even he, we find, does not despair,
Tho' day at times scarce even glimmers there.
Mere folly then, those ills, from pride, that flow,
On weather or on climate thus to throw;
The vacant mind, the idle, and inert,
Alone such foolish maxims can assert.
To him, the weather matters not, whose mind,
By virtue's charm'd, or is by sense refin'd.
Thus, when amusement life's dull hour beguiles,
The lab'ring vintager unheeding smiles;
No slave of dulness, grief, or useless fear,
Tho' burning Ætna thunders in his ear;

Nor cares nor fears his busied mind appal,
Tho' o'er his head her smoking ashes fall;
Wrapt in the safe elysium of thought,
His mind with joys unspeakable is fraught.

Thus, in thy climate, England, fair and free,
No cause of baneful suicide we see.
Oft in some countries custom is a law,
No inf'rence, here, can thence self-murder draw.
Custom in Rome might consecrate a crime,
Not so in England's bold enlighten'd clime;
Her nobler customs yield crimes no excuse,
Virtue in Rome, in England is th' abuse.

Superstition bids th' Hindoo women burn;
India's darkness here can we discern?
The Hindoo women sacrifice themselves
To their departed husbands, silly elves!
Our British stoics cannot thence discern,
The same excuse that teaches them to burn:
Unless the unison of sense and brains,
A mental wedlock is, the fool maintains;
Then, to the manes of departed sense,
To sacrifice themselves they have pretence.

The savage African, in Barbary, (24)
Destroys himself to shew his loyalty;
But highborn Britons, bold, enlighten'd, free,
Tho' loyal too, can thence no precept see,
To throw away those lives, (a trait'rous shame,)
To which their country has so great a claim.
England, for shame! the world's fair ridicule!
Well may our foes both laugh and call thee fool,
To see that sword which keeps the world in awe,
Britons against themselves unwisely draw;
On heath'nish altars spill that noble blood,
That might be shed best for their country's good.

Whether from climate or November's gloom,
England becomes self-murder's crowded tomb:
Or, whether a diseased blood's the cause,
Or melancholy 'tis gives life that pause,
I'll argue not—but seriously make known
A cause, peculiar too, to us alone;

Amid all ranks, all stations, daily seen,
For, lo! credulity's the cause I mean.
That is the monster who, in varied make,
Tempt's man the road of suicide to take.
Lur'd by this fiend, we are so fond of quacks,
That scarce an action some empirick lacks.
We've quacks political to mend the state,
And quacks divine, who read the book of fate;
Quacks militant and civil meet the view,
And quacks to cure all corp'ral evils too;
Thus fend of quack'ry, wonder not we find,
In suicide, a quack that cures the mind;
Who too, an universal nostrum shews;
Yes, Suicide's a cure for all our woes.
In cases desp'rate, sudden the relief,
One pill's a dose for anguish or for grief;
Like other empirisms, ever sure
To kill the patient—and thus, sure to cure.
Woe be to him, who, sick with human pride,
Flies for relief to this said Suicide;
For this the rare prescription they may have,
Thus, quaintly worded—"recipe—the grave."
But this is ridicule; and, if you please,
'Tis the best remedy for this disease.
Tho' virtue's in morality combin'd,
Keen ridicule's the med'cine of the mind;
But not the mind o'er whose dark woe-struck pow'rs,
The cloud of melancholic frenzy low'rs;
Causing despair, and that disease beside,
That worst of mental fevers, Suicide.
Ah! dire disease! that springs from such a cause,
As gives to human energy a pause.

Yet there is hope, whate'er the act's defin'd,
A crime, a folly, or disease of mind.
Suicide's a crime, willingly when sought,
And by a whip must be to reason brought.
But when oft urg'd by pain or anguish dire,
A folly 'tis 'gainst which truth should conspire;
In patience, then, a virtue you may find,
At least, it will preserve calm peace of mind;

But when it from insanity takes root,
Restraint but strengthens th' extraneous shoot ;
Harsh treatment and confinement have been tried,
Only to stimulate the suicide ;
To seek in other worlds the hope of bliss,
Thus plung'd in life's worst misery in this ;
For, tho' of mental sense entire bereft,
To madmen, still, a nice distinction's left.
" Blows and strait waistcoats no sov'reignty gain,
Where the lost mind's a stranger to all pain.
Unwearied tenderness, and vigilance,
To conquer phrenzy have a fairer chance ;
No private madhouses for cure of mind,
As factories for madness more design'd."
Imprison not the object of your charge,
Rather the circle of his views enlarge.
These, to reclaim, may have some fair pretence ;
We must entice if we would recall sense.
In sounder minds, when thought presumes to roam,
Sense, by compulsion, will not sometimes come ;
Not e'en the mind, by heav'n-born fancy taught,
Can force conception, or compel the thought.

But when the act from melancholy springs,
'Tis a disease whose cure no med'cine brings ;
Nor can restraint the growing ill assail,
Nor can advice, however sweet, prevail.
No hope in corp'ral punishment's combin'd,
Where the disorder centres in the mind.
Physicians equally as well might use
Mere pharmacy to heal an inward bruise.
Nor will religious exhortation do ;
Vain are the arts of solid reason too.
To one thus dead to feeling, but his own,
In vain the law its sentence too makes known,
That in cross roads, unhallow'd ground, must lie
Those wretches who by their own hands thus die.
That foolish sentence hurts but him that lives ;
Nor selfish suicide one moment grieves.
Thus deaf to caution, law, restraint, and rule,
'Tis only mov'd by well-tim'd ridicule.

Mild ridicule, with change of scene and place,
 May, from the woe-struck mind, the foul fiend chase.
 That which in vain, by rigour's tempest tost,
 May in the vortex of society be lost;
 But company select,—no mixture's good,
 For melancholy best loves solitude.
 The blaze of company howe'er refin'd,
 Sheds but a deeper darkness o'er the mind;
 And that society 'bove all is worst,
 By Bacchanalian Orgies oft accurst.
 Drink, tho' by some advis'd, no hope can lend,
 Of Suicide, the kin and liquid friend.
 The one kills quick the object of its lure,
 The other by a poison, slow yet sure,
 Not character alone, drink stabs, and damns,
 But *mortal* stabs are given too, by drams.
 Yes, in that secret foe of human life,
 Behold an "air-drawn dagger," *liquid knife*!

T'encourage it, (do senator's debate,)
 Because it brings much treasure to the state!
 England, Self-murder's isle! name right applied,
 Since her best impost is on Suicide!

Yes, ridicule and social intercourse
 Are often melancholy's best resource,
 But that is when we nip it in the shoot,
 And not when it has ta'en too deep a root.
 Soon as we can then, we the fiend should rouse,
 For men grow fonder as it older grows:
 They nurse their sorrows as asthmatics nurse their
 breath,

As if they thought, when parted with, 'tis instant
 Egyptians thus with equal fondness led,
 Embalm with care and keep their putrid dead;
 Thinking that true, on which their faith insists,
 That whilst the body lasts the soul exists.

Yes, we the fiend should rouse and quickly too,
 Or dire the consequence that will ensue:
 Nor think, since seems the patient so inert,
 There is not fire enough to do much hurt.
 The look deep fix'd,—lack lustre, vacant stare,—
 That senseless quietude,—dull apathy, beware!

For know, as senseless or more dull he grows,
The greatest dread of danger surely flows.
Ah! when you think him able least to act,
'Tis then the direst scenes he may enact;
Yes, when you see that stupor, always fear
Something most sadly dreadful then is near:
For wisdom, this, in nature's volume reads,
Torpor, convulsion, gen'rally precedes.

Nor melancholy should as I maintain,
Be left in her opinions to maintain.
The state of things, their form and proper light,
Should be explain'd and shewn to her aright.
Grief measures life, by her own dismal woe,
Thinks all the world a waste, because she's so:
Like jealousy, she sees with jaundic'd eyes,
Or thro' a colour'd glass all things describes.
Just giving each, warm sunshine, shade, or gloom,
As fancy or dull temper may presume;
And not abroad alone, but e'en at home,
External darkness vies with inward gloom,
The house of melancholy, hence, we view.
Just like herself as sad and wretched too;
Like her companion Superstition, seen,
An emblem that without of what's within.
As all within is dread, despair and doubt,
So dull confusion too prevails without.
So superstition as by frenzy taught,
By outward acts displays her inward thought:
Hence of a palace they a model take,
Just like a gridiron, for St. Laurence' sake.
And lo! in England with the like intent,
They, like a candle, build a monument!

When reason, vainly, may the mind assail,
O'er which self-murder's cause seems to prevail;
When nature's inward dread and outward blush,
Cannot its base and dire incentive crush;
When all the reas'ning of the modern school,
Availeth nought, then welcome ridicule.

Best foe to Suicide is ridicule,
Of which the theatre's the classic school.

To work reform, religion, once a tool,
Is superseded now by ridicule ;
Things are so alter'd in these flagrant days,
Sermons are scarce so moral now as plays ;
Men mount the pulpit for the place unfit,
And grace is now as slow in growth as wit.
E'en those who seem most earnest in the cause,
Court popularity and mere applause.
Nor know we what we most a want of feel,
Poetic genius or religious zeal.
Alike deficient seems both church and stage ;
This is as good as that in our sad age.
True, both damn bad performances, yet sad to scan,
This damns the work of God, that, but the work of
man.

The scene, the preacher, shifts from life to death,
Begins—then pauses—sings, then wisely saith,
What man once *was*,—what man should rightly *be*,
But what man *is*, you on the stage may see.
There, folly is upheld to ridicule,
Without once breaking fair decorum's rule.
The stage, on folly, makes its grand assault,
Stabs not the character, but wounds the fault ;
Conceals the anguish too, it makes you feel ;
T'expose a wound is not the way to heal.

Oh ! where an art so gen'rous can we find,
Administ'ring thus, med'cine to the mind ;
Purging the thick'ning follies of the brain,
Easing the patient without giving pain !
Healing what common physic cannot cure,
And heartfelt pangs no patient can endure ;
Searching those parts, where nothing else can go,
No probe can run, no healing balsam flow ;
Touching the latent, wounded, deepest sense,
And probing e'en the very conscience !

If such the pow'r of our theatric art,
To Suicide it may some hope impart.
There—in that honest mirror of the stage,
Is best expos'd, that folly of our age.
Tho' keen the ridicule, from thence we feel,
It like the surgeon's knife, but cuts to heal.

NOTES.

(1) P. 21—Plutarch states, “The Romans pursued those that fled into their camp, where they saw a most horrid tragedy: the women, standing in mourning by their carriages slew all that fled—some their husbands, some their brethren, and others their fathers; and strangling their little children with their own hands, they threw them under the wheels and horses feet, and last of all killed themselves. They tell us of one that was hanging at the very top of a waggon, with her children tied at her heels. The men, for want of trees, tied themselves by the necks, some to the horns of their oxen, others to their legs; that so, pricking them on, by the starting and springing of the beasts, they might be torn or trodden to pieces.

(2) P. 22—This is an assertion of an advocate for suicide.

(3) P. 26—Alluding to the sixth commandment, “Thou shalt do no murder;” or “thou shalt not kill;” the general intent and meaning of which is fully argued in page 43.

(4) P. 29—According to St. John’s Gospel, chap. 19, it appears these were our Saviour’s last words.

(5) P. 62—A genuine anecdote of Buonaparte, as related in the French papers, during his consulate.

(6) P. 72—This section is written in consequence of the erroneous supposition and assertion that Cato was more immediately encouraged to kill himself from the assurance of the immortality of the soul, as argued by Plato.

(7) P. 111—An Essayist observes, that the power of committing suicide is regarded by Pliny as an advantage which men possess even above the deity himself—“*Deus non sibi potest mortem consciscere si velit quod homini dedit optimum in tangis vitæ pænis.*” Lib. ii. cap. 7.

(8) P. 111—Plato, in his *Phædo*, discusses the immortality of the soul, which Cato read twice through the night before he killed himself.

(9) P. 111—Addison, in his tragedy of *Cato*, sets forth the noble Roman’s suicide in a manner so alluring and exalted, as to superficial readers seems to imply a decided approbation of the guilty act, which unfair misconception of the author’s intention is said to have misled many. Indeed, an anecdote of the dangerous influence of this play is related of one, who, having involved himself by extravagance in the deepest distress, plunged himself into the

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Thames as the oblivion of sorrow, leaving on his bureau this justification of the fatal deed : “ What Cato did, and Addison approved, cannot be wrong.” But in this he was sadly mistaken, for neither Cato did as he did, nor did Addison approve it. The Roman hero did not kill himself, because he was ruined by extravagance and dissipation : those who would imitate Cato, should be like him. Plausible as may be the excuse he had for self-murder, they who follow his example in dying that way, do not ask of themselves whether they have followed his example of life also. “ Are they like Cato, the glory and admiration of his day ? ” As to Addison’s approval of suicide being implied from his excellent tragedy, is a direct misconception ; for, when he wrote it, as an Essayist justly observes, he was merely writing Cato’s life ; “ and, in recording the manner of his death, he was only acting the part of a faithful historian, and not holding up (what the Romans called heroic) his exit from this world, but his virtues, as an example to a reader or an audience.”

(10) P. 111—Hume wrote in favour of suicide.

(11) P. 111—A novel called the Sorrows of Werter, of a very dangerous tendency.

(12) P. 111—Robeck deliberated so gravely on suicide, that he had patience to write a large volume on the subject ; and when he concluded, according to his principles, that it was lawful for a man to put an end to his being, he destroyed himself with the same composure that he wrote.

(13) P. 113—Elphinston thus translates a passage from Pythagoras :

Of all the woes that load the mortal state,
Whate’er thy portion, mildly meet your fate,
But ease it as thou canst.

(14) P. 113—Cleomenes, king of Sparta, when suffering under misfortune, was advised by Tharyceon to kill himself. “ Thinkest thou, wicked man,” said he, “ to shew thy fortitude by rushing upon death ? an expedient always at hand, the dastardly resource of the basest minds. Better than we, by the fortune of arms, or overpowered by numbers, have left the field of battle to their enemies ; but he who, to avoid pain or calamity, or from a slavish regard to the praises or censures of men, gives up the contest, is overcome by his own cowardice. If we are to seek death, that death ought to be in action. It is base to live or die only for ourselves. All we gain by suicide is to get rid of

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present difficulty, without increasing our own reputation, or doing the least service to our country. In hopes, then, we may yet be of some use to others, both, methinks, are bound to preserve life as long as we can. Whenever these hopes shall have altogether abandoned us, death, if sought for, will be readily found."

(15) P. 113—These worthies of ancient days, both in their lives and examples, gave such evidence in favour of patience under suffering and resignation to their lot, that it is almost needless to observe how much they must have abhorred the crime of suicide.

(16) P. 113—Our immortal Bard, in his tragedy of Hamlet, fully argues the folly and unlawfulness of suicide :

" Or, that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!"

" To be, or not to be, that is the question :

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The stings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

Or take up arms against a sea of troubles,

And by opposing, end them? To die, to sleep——

No more; and by a sleep, to say we end

The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks

That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation

Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep ;—

To sleep! Perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub ;

For, in that sleep of death, what dreams may come,

When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,

Must give us pause—There's the respect

That makes calamity of so long life.

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,

Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,

The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,

The insolence of office, and the spurns

That patient merit of the unworthy takes,

When he himself might his quietus make

With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,

To groan and sweat under weary life,

But that the dread of something after death,

(That undiscover'd country, from whose bourne

No traveller returns), puzzles the will,

And make us rather bear the ills we have,

Than fly to others that we know not of."

(17) P. 113—This excellent poet, in his *Paradise Lost*, speaks against self-murder in strong terms:

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“ Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems
To argue in thee something more sublime
And excellent than what thy mind contemns.
But self-destruction therefore sought, refutes
That excellence thought in thee, and implies
Not thy contempt of life, but anguish and regret
For loss of life and pleasure over lov'd.
Or if thou covet death, as utmost end
Of misery, so thinking to evade
The penalty pronounc'd, doubt not but God
Hath wiselier arm'd his vengeful ire than so
To be forestall'd ; much more I fear least death
So snatched will not exempt us from the pain
We are by doom to pay ; rather such acts
Of contumacy will provoke the highest
To make death in us live.”

“ Nor love thy life, nor hate : but what thou liv'st,
Live well : how long or short permit to heaven.”

(18) P. 113—This poet, in his “ Seasons,” just says:
But far about, they wander from the grave
Of him, whom his ungentle fortune urg'd
Against his own sad breast to lift the hand
Of impious violence.

(19) P. 113—Rousseau wrote two letters on Suicide.

(20) P. 114—This event is said to have actually taken place during the French Revolution.

(21) P. 126—This was a fable invented by the ancients, to set forth the value of hope. The learned believe it was formed upon the tradition of the fall of man. According to Pagan theology, our forefather was presented by Pandora with a great vessel, upon lifting up whose lid, there flew out all the plagues and calamities incident to mortality, from which, until then, mankind had altogether been exempt ; but, by way of consolation, Hope, which had been inclosed within the cup, remained at the bottom until the lid was shut down upon her.

(22) P. 128 In the list of diseases, Dr Cullen enumerates 150, Sauvage 315, Linnæus 326, Sagar 351, and Vogel 560.

(23) P. 128. Saturn the remotest planet of the Solar System, is supposed by astronomers to impress melancholy.

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L. A.

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